KALYANA KALPATARU

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हरे कृष्ण हरे कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण हरे हरे ॥

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Sri Ramacharitamanasa

Descent I

(Bālakāṇḍa)

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The Beloved of Devotees

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते । पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

He who seeth Me everywhere, and seeth everything in Me,
Of him will I never lose hold, and he shall never lose hold of Me.

(*Bhagavadgītā* VI. 30)

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दूर्वादलद्युतितनुं तरुणाब्जनेत्रं
हेमाम्बरं वरविभूषणभूषणाङ्गम् ।
कन्दर्पकोटिकमनीयकिशोरमूर्तिं
पूर्तिं मनोरथभुवां भज जानकीशम् ॥

Adore the Lord of Jānakī, whose swarthy form possesses the hue of the Dūrvā grass, whose eyes resemble a pair of full-blown lotuses, who is clad in yellow garments, whose limbs lend charm to His lovely ornaments, whose youthful person attracts the mind of millions of Cupids and who fulfils the objects of one's desire.

Tributes from Contemporary and other Mediaeval Poets

Sacred to the Hindu and the Muslim alike

The holy *Rāmacharitamānasa* is the very life-breath of saints. It is like Veda to the Hindu and the holy Koran itself to the Muslim.

Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khana

A Source of Incomparable Joy

The story of Rāma sung by Tulasīdāsa grants all one's desires like the celestial cow. It is a mine of the fourfold rewards of human existence (viz., religious merit, prosperity, sensuous enjoyment and Liberation) and a source of incomparable delight and gladdens the heart by its very presence. It shines forth as a wreath of basil leaves, so charming to the bee-like hearts of holy men, and has thus served, says Toṣa, as a bridge for men intending to cross the ocean of mundane existence.

Toṣa

Sweeter than Nectar

The poetry of Goswami Tulasidas is as it were the fourfold fruit (in the form of religious merit etc.) appearing on the celestial creepers; nay, it is endearing as the stream of milk flowing from the udders of the celestial cow. To put it otherwise, the poet bears on his broad bosom and round his neck a shining string of wish-yielding gems as it were. Nay, by its association with the story of the Lord the poet's mellifluous composition delights even liberated souls and is pleasing to the poet Raskhan. It mocks sugar, derides hardened sugar, chides sugar candy and makes nectar itself blush as it were.

Raskhan.

Tributes from Modern Admirers

[Messages were received from some leading men of this country in the year 1938 for the "Mānasa Number" of the Hindi 'Kalyan', and some opinions were culled from other sources. They are reproduced below, some having been translated from Hindi and others in original. It is sad to think that most of those gentlemen are no longer in our midst. Their opinions are nonetheless valuable now and will be of absorbing interest to the reader. *—Editor*]

The Best Work on Devotion

Tulasidas had a marvellous faith. His faith has bequeathed to the Hindus a precious book like the Ramayan. The Ramayan is a literary masterpiece; but its literary merit pales into insignificance before the charm of its devotional spirit. The realms of faith and intellect lie apart. Faith leads to the development of subjective knowledge or spiritual insight and is therefore conducive to internal purity as a matter of course. The intellect helps the growth of objective knowledge or the knowledge of the world. But no such relation as that of cause and effect exists between this latter knowledge and self-purification. Intellectual giants are found to be moral rakes too. But faith and immorality can never co-exist. The reader can understand from the above that a child can develop the highest faith and yet continue to possess a puny intellect. How can man attain this faith? An answer to this is found in the Gita, in the Ramacharitamanasa......I regard the Ramayan of Tulasidas as the best volume on the cult of Devotion.

M. K. Gandhi.

A Source of Ineffable Joy and Solace to Humanity

The *Mānasa-Rāmāyaṇa* of Goswami Tulasidas is a unique work of its kind in the literature of the world. It is a scripture epitomizing the teachings of the Vedas, Smṛtis and Purāṇas for all the four castes, viz., the Brahmans, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras, and for all the four religious orders, viz., students, householders, anchorites and recluses. The threefold current of Jñāna (spiritual knowledge), Bhakti (Devotion) and Vairāgya (Dispassion) is ever flowing there like the holy Triveṇī (the triple stream of the Gangā, Yamunā and Saraswatī) at Prayag. It has been the be-all and end-all of the life of innumerable souls. Millions of devotees have drunk from it to their heart's fill the nectar of Jñāna, Bhakti and Vairāgya; and till the end of this creation many more millions will continue to derive unique joy and solace from this volume.

The world has not yet fully recognized the merits of this incomparable work. But my conviction is that even as its merits come to light more and more during the coming years, its rendering will appear in numerous languages of the world. This work is a source of ineffable joy and solace to the entire human race. Blessed are those who recite or listen to the *Mānasa-Rāmāyaṇa* or *Vinaya-Patrikā* of Goswami Tulasidas. And still more blessed are those who render invaluable service to the public by publishing cheap and beautiful editions of this book and making its

copies available to the humblest man. My prayer is that cheapest and most neatly printed editions of *Mānasa-Rāmāyaṇa* may reach the hands of the largest number and that countless men may be benefited by its holy teachings. Discourses on the *Rāmāyaṇa* are held in a number of towns and villages even to this day. Where no such discourses are held, arrangements should be made to hold them and its sacred teachings popularized more and more from day to day. *Madan Mohan Malaviya.*

'Perfect Example of the Perfect Book'

Half a century later, contemporary with our Shakespeare, we find the poet and reformer Tulasidas (died 1623). This extraordinary man, who, if we take for our test the influence that he exercises at the present day, was one of the half-dozen great writers that Asia has produced, deserves more than a brief reference. He is commonly known to Europeans as the author of a history of Rama, but he is far more than that. He occupies a position among the singers of Rāma *Saga*, peculiar to himself. Unlike the numerous religious poets who dwelt in the Doab, and whose theme was Kṛṣṇa, he lived humbly in Benares, unequalled and alone in his niche in the Temple of Fame. Disciples he had in plenty,—today they are numbered by millions,—but imitators, none. Looking back through the vista of centuries we see his noble figure standing in its own pure light as the guide and saviour of Hindustan. His influence has never ceased, nay, it has ever kept increasing; and only when we reflect upon the fate of Tantra-ridden Bengal or on the wanton orgies that are carried on under the name of Kṛṣṇa-worship can we justly appreciate the work of the man who in Northern India taught the infinite vileness of sin and the infinite graciousness of the Deity, and whose motto might have been—

'He prayeth best who loveth best all things both great and small.'

But Tulasidas did not only teach this elevated system of religion,—he succeeded in getting his teaching accepted. He founded no sect, laid down no dogmatic creed, and yet his great work is at the present day the one Bible of ninety millions of people, and fortunate it has been for them that they had this guide. It has been received as the perfect example of the perfect book and thus its influence has been exercised not only over the unlettered multitude but over the long series of authors who followed him, and especially over the crowd which sprang into existence with the introduction of printing at the beginning of the last century. As Mr. Growse says in the Introduction to his translation of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, of this author; "the book is in everyone's hands, from the court to the cottage, and is read and heard and appreciated alike by every class of the Hindu community, whether high or low, rich or poor, young or old." In fact, the importance of Tulasidas in the history of India cannot be overrated. Putting the literary merits of his work out of the question, the fact of its *UNIVERSAL* acceptance by all classes, from Bhagalpur to the Punjab, and from the Himalaya to the Nerbudda, surely demands more than a polite acknowledgement of his existence. Half a century ago, an old missionary said to me that no one could hope to understand the natives of Upper India till he had mastered every line that Tulasidas had written. I have since learned to know how right he was.

Sir G. A. Grierson in the *Linguistic Survey of India,* Vol. I, Part Introductory 1927 Calcutta.

The Finest Work in any Indian Vernacular

I have read Tulasidas's Ramayana through and through, at least three times, and entertain great respect and love for the poet and this great Work.

Tulasidas was a great devotee of the "Lord" combining in himself (a rare combination) the quintessence of Jñāna and Prema. His saintly life, his wide and tolerant outlook and his insight into the mysteries of existence cannot fail to engage the attention and admiration of even the casual reader. I believe his Ramayana is the finest work in any of the Indian vernaculars and, what is a bold thing to say, excels Valmiki's immortal epic in certain respects. So it is rightly regarded by the Hindi-speaking populations of India as a "gem of purest ray serene". To know Tulasidas's Ramayana is to know all that need be known.

I am glad that in the "Manasa Number" you are giving the authenticated text of the original Work along with its translation in prose. If I may make a suggestion in this connection, you should give an alphabetical Word Index; because, in the reading of the Ramayana, I have found that it contains many words the meaning of which is obscure even to a person well-versed in Sanskrit.

Hirendranath Datta

Musical Ring of Tulasidas's Poetry

The name of Goswami Tulasidas is quite familiar to the Marathas. He has already occupied a place of honour in the hierarchy of Maratha saints or Santa Malikas. His romantic life-story is a popular theme or "Akhyan" for our Haridasas and his lucid Dohas are relished by all. Years ago, I remember, a Maratha scholar of Jubbulpore, Mr. Jamdar, brought out an edition of "Tulasi Ramayan" for the Maratha public, in which he had given a Marathi translation of the original Hindi text and it was very much appreciated both by scholars and the public at large.

Tulasidas is a past master in simile and metaphor and like a mellow murmuring spring his lucid Dohas are music to the ear even of a Marathi layman, who is not conversant with the Hindi language.

N. C. Kelkar.

Immortal Teachings of the Ramayana

Valmiki in Sanskrit and Tulasidas in Hindi have rendered themselves immortal by their epic works, which will ever live. The whole story of the Ramayana is elevating and inspiring. The loyalty of Rāma to his father and his regard for the views and wishes of his subjects; the wifely devotion of Sītā and the brotherly devotion of Lakshmana and Bharata; the wisdom of Shanta; the Bhakti of Hanuman, —these are but a few of the lessons they teach humanity for all time.

C. Y. Chintamani.

Ramayana, a very human Story

The Ramayana is a very human story; and the constant struggles between good and evil which run throughout the tale have a great fascination for me and I love reading it over and over.

Maharajadhiraj Sir Bijoy Chand Mahtab Bahadur of Burdwan.

Ramayan, the Bible of Humanity

You will be doing a distinct service in getting a popular edition of the Ramayan out...... The teachings of the book have formed the warp and woof of the life of the Indian villager and anything that will tend to the better understanding of the worthy lessons contained in that book will strengthen adherence to truth and emphasize service of humanity— whether it be as father, mother, son or wife—that an individual has the privilege to render during his life. The book has been rightly described by a well-known French writer—Chateau Briand—as the Bible of humanity and it will continue to be such as long as a reading public, rightly educated, is forthcoming to attend to its lessons.

V. N. Mehta.

An Epitome of all Scriptures and Philosophical Works

Tulasīdāsa has rendered a most valuable service to the world by composing the *Rāmacharitamānasa.* The scriptures and philosophical works, that were written in Sanskrit, had become almost a sealed book to the masses because of the waning popularity of that language. Their study was confined to a few scholars alone. People listened to them here and there in the form of religious discourses. Only such hearsay and oral knowledge was available to the masses. At this juncture came Tulasīdāsa, who placed before the public in the Hindi language the cream that he had extracted from the whole range of scriptural and philosophical literature. Ever since the *Mānasa* was composed one does not know what an untold number of men and women have derived and still derive spiritual benefit therefrom. Therefore, it will be no exaggeration to say that during the past three centuries the *Mānasa* alone has served the purpose of all the scriptures and philosophical works for the masses of Northern India.

The recitation of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is popular in Northern India. In the morning after completing the daily routine and during the night people recite it either singly or in batches and there are hundreds of thousands of villagers who, though unlettered, have learnt by heart a number of verses from the *Rāmāyaṇa* by hearing and chanting them in groups, and they have occasion to repeat them from time to time. The words of Tulasīdāsa possess a charm which is peculiar to the words of a devotee and saint alone. That is the reason why the *Rāmāyaṇa* is sung with

love, devotion and reverence even to this day. And that is why numberless men and women have continued to derive help from this work in crossing the ocean of mundane existence. Tulasīdāsa wrote the *Mānasa* only as the outpouring of a devotee's heart and it is due to this nature of the work that its words possess such a unique power.

But even to those who are no devotees the book contains such a poetical charm, such mellifluence, such a graceful blending of sentiments and an art so highly developed that it can compete with the greatest epic poems of the world. Those who would enjoy the beauty of poetry alone can and do read it and feel blessed by enjoying the same. I go further and believe that even those who study this masterpiece as a work of poetry cannot but be imbued with the sentiment of devotion to some extent in the long run, to say nothing of those who read it reverently in a devout spirit. An English writer (Addison) wrote in one of his essays that it had been his ambition to cull the most sublime philosophical truths from philosophical libraries and scatter them in the streets for the masses. It is not known whether this ambition of his was realized through his essays or not; but it is unquestionably true that Tulasīdāsa has been able to scatter the highest truths of religion and philosophy, in a charming, graceful and plain language, not only in the streets but in every village and every home and in such a way that even an ignorant fool could not but be benefited thereby.

Rajendra Prasad.

Spiritual Development through Tulasidas's Ramayan

Ayodhya was a city state which was a model to the states of India and which may well be a model to the modern political India. Sri Rama was a great king who has been not merely idealized by the Hindus but idolized, deified and made example of to all men on earth so that we speak of *Ramaraj* when a state is well administered. He was noted for His three qualities: Hitavak, Priyavak and Madhuravak. It is not enough to be righteous or truthful. Whatever you say in support of truth and righteousness must be said sweetly and pleasantly as far as possible so as to do good to the opposite party. No greater service can be done in the domain of spiritual development than the propagation of literature relating to this great work, Tulasidas's Ramayan.

B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya.

Popularity of the Ramayana

No work of literature is more popular (than the Ramayana) and none commands a greater respect from rich and poor alike. Written centuries ago, it still retains a freshness and charm almost unrivalled in the literature of the whole world. There is no man in India who was not thrilled and inspired in his childhood by the great events and the noble ideas of the Ramayana.

Syamaprasad Mukerjee.

A Rare Masterpiece Dealing with both the Worlds

I read the Ramayan in prison 17 years ago. It had a varied appeal. The mind and soul had enough to feed upon and enrich themselves. The Ramayan can hold the field as one of those rare masterpieces which deal simultaneously and effectively with things of both the worlds.

Jairamdas Daulatram.

Procedure of Reciting the Ramacharitamanasa

Those who undertake to recite the *Rāmacharitamānasa* according to the correct procedure should before commencing the recitation invoke and worship the author, Goswami Tulasidas, the sage Vālmīki, Lord Śiva and Śrī Hanumān, and then invoke the Divine Couple, Sītā and Rāma, along with Śrī Rāma's three brothers (Bharata, Lakṣmaṇa and Śatrughna), offer them the sixteenfold worship and meditate on them. The recitation should be commenced after that.

INVOCATION

तुलसीक नमस्तुभ्यमिहागच्छ शुचिव्रत ।
नैर्ऋत्य उपविश्येदं पूजनं प्रतिगृह्यताम् ॥ १ ॥
ॐ तुलसीदासाय नमः ।

"Obeisance to you, O Tulasīdāsa; please come here, O saint of holy vow. Taking your seat in the south-west, accept this homage. Obeisance to Tulasīdāsa."

श्रीवाल्मीक नमस्तुभ्यमिहागच्छ शुभप्रद ।
उत्तरपूर्वयोर्मध्ये तिष्ठ गृह्णीष्व मेऽर्चनम् ॥ २ ॥
ॐ वाल्मीकाय नमः ।

"Obeisance to you, O Vālmīki; pray come here, O bestower of blessings. Take your seat in the north-east and accept my homage. Obeisance to Vālmīki."

गौरीपते नमस्तुभ्यमिहागच्छ महेश्वर ।
पूर्वदक्षिणयोर्मध्ये तिष्ठ पूजां गृहाण मे ॥ ३ ॥
ॐ गौरीपतये नमः ।

"Obeisance to You, O Spouse of Gaurī (Pārvatī); pray come here, O mighty Lord. Kindly take Your seat in the south-east and accept my homage. Obeisance to the Lord of Gaurī."

श्रीलक्ष्मण नमस्तुभ्यमिहागच्छ सहप्रियः ।
याम्यभागे समातिष्ठ पूजनं संगृहाण मे ॥ ४ ॥
ॐ श्रीसपत्नीकाय लक्ष्मणाय नमः ।

"Obeisance to you, O Lakṣmaṇa; please come here with your beloved consort (Urmilā). Kindly occupy the southern quarter of the altar, and accept my homage. Obeisance to Lakṣmaṇa with his consort."

श्रीशत्रुघ्न नमस्तुभ्यमिहागच्छ सहप्रियः ।
पीठस्य पश्चिमे भागे पूजनं स्वीकुरुष्व मे ॥ ५ ॥
ॐ श्रीसपत्नीकाय शत्रुघ्नाय नमः ।

"Obeisance to you, O Śatrughna; please come here with your beloved consort. Seating yourself in the western quarter of this altar pray accept my homag Obeisance to Śatrughna with his consor (Śrutakīrti)."

श्रीभरत नमस्तुभ्यमिहागच्छ सहप्रियः ।
पीठकस्योत्तरे भागे तिष्ठ पूजां गृहाण मे ॥ ६ ॥
ॐ श्रीसपत्नीकाय भरताय नमः ।

"Obeisance to you, O Bharata; pra come here with your beloved conso (Māṇḍavī). Please sit down in the northe

quarter of the altar and accept my homage. Obeisance to Bharata and his wife."

श्रीहनुमन्नमस्तुभ्यमिहागच्छ कृपानिधे ।
पूर्वभागे समातिष्ठ पूजनं स्वीकुरु प्रभो ॥ ७ ॥
ॐ हनुमते नमः ।

"Obeisance to you, O Hanumān; pray come here, O mine of compassion. Please occupy the eastern quarter and accept my homage, O Lord. Obeisance to Hanumān."

अथ प्रधानपूजा च कर्तव्या विधिपूर्वकम् ।
पुष्पाञ्जलिं गृहीत्वा तु ध्यानं कुर्यात्परस्य च ॥ ८ ॥

The principal deity (Śrī Rāma accompanied by His Consort, Sītā) should then be worshipped with due ceremony. Taking flowers in the hollow of his palms the reciter should meditate on the supreme Deity (Śrī Rāma) in the light of the following verse:—

रक्ताम्भोजदलाभिरामनयनं पीताम्बरालंकृतं
श्यामाङ्गं द्विभुजं प्रसन्नवदनं श्रीसीतया शोभितम् ।
कारुण्यामृतसागरं प्रियगणैर्भ्रात्रादिभिर्भावितं
वन्दे विष्णुशिवादिसेव्यमनिशं भक्तेष्टसिद्धिप्रदम् ॥ ९ ॥

"I ever adore Śrī Rāma, whose charming eyes resemble the petals of a red lotus, who is clad in yellow raiments and has a swarthy form endowed with a pair of arms, who wears a cheerful countenance, is accompanied by Śrī Sītā, and is an ocean of nectar in the form of mercy, who is waited upon even by Viṣṇu, Śiva and others and is meditated upon along with His three brothers and other favourite attendants (Hanumān, Vasiṣṭha and others) and who grants the desire of His devotees."

आगच्छ जानकीनाथ जानक्या सह राघव ।
गृहाण मम पूजां च वायुपुत्रादिभिर्युतः ॥१०॥

"Please come, O Lord of Janaka's Daughter, along with Janakī, and accept my homage with Hanumān (son of the Wind-god) and others, O Scion of Raghu."

सुवर्णरचितं राम दिव्यास्तरणशोभितम् ।
आसनं हि मया दत्तं गृहाण मणिचित्रितम् ॥११॥

"Occupy, O Rāma, this bejewelled seat of gold, offered by me, and spread over with an exquisite covering."

The Deity should then be worshipped with the sixteenfold equipage prescribed in the scriptures.*

ॐ अस्य श्रीमन्मानसरामायणश्रीरामचरितस्य श्रीशिवकाकभुशुण्डियाज्ञवल्क्यगोस्वामितुलसीदासा ऋषयः श्रीसीतारामो देवता श्रीरामनाम बीजं भवरोगहरी भक्तिः शक्तिः, मम नियन्त्रिताशेषविघ्नतया श्रीसीतारामप्रीतिपूर्वकसकलमनोरथसिद्ध्यर्थं पाठे विनियोगः ।

"Of this story of Śrī Rāma, known by the name of "Mānasa Rāmāyaṇa", Lord Śiva, the sages Kākabhuśuṇḍi and Yājñavalkya and Goswami Tulasidas are the seers; Śrī Rāma united with His Consort, Sītā, is the deity; the name 'Rāma' is the seed; Devotion, which cures the disease of transmigration, is the Śakti (motive force or energy); and the object of this recitation is to ward off all evils and accomplish all one's desires through the propitiation of Sītā and Rāma."

* The sixteenfold equipage of worship consists of:—

1. Pādya (water for washing the feet); 2. Arghya (water for washing the hands); 3. Achamanīya (water for rinsing the mouth); 4. Snānīya (water for performing the ablutions); 5. Vastra (raiment); 6. Ābhūṣaṇa (ornaments); 7. Gandha (sandal-paste), 8. Puṣpa (flowers); 9. Dhūpa (burning incense); 10. Dīpa (light); 11. Naivedya (food); 12. Āchamanīya (water for rinsing the mouth); 13. Tāmbūla (betel-leaves with other ingredients for cleansing and scenting the mouth): 14. Stava-Pāṭha (singing praises), 15. Tarpaṇa (water for slaking thirst) and 16. Namaskāra (salutation).

Then water should be sipped thrice with the recitation of the following Mantras one after another: श्रीसीतारामाय नमः, श्रीरामचन्द्राय नमः and श्रीरामभद्राय नमः. A Pranayama should also be performed with the recitation of the Bija-mantra sacred to Sita and Rāma.

KARANYASA

Karanyāsa consists in invoking and installing typical Mantras on the various fingers, palms and back of the hands. In *Karanyāsa* as well as in *Anganyāsa* the Mantras are treated as possessing a living form and it is these personified forms of the Mantras that are touched and greeted by citing the names of the particular limbs. Through this process the reciter himself is identified with the Mantra and brought under the full protection of the Mantra-god. He is purified both externally and internally and is infused with divine energy. His spiritual practice runs a smooth course till the very end and proves beneficial to him.

The procedure of 'Karanyasa' in this case is as follows:—

जग मंगल गुनग्राम राम के। दानि मुकुति धन धरम धाम के॥
अङ्गुष्ठाभ्यां नमः॥

(The hosts of virtues possessed by Rāma are a blessing to the world and the bestowers of Liberation, riches, religious merit and the divine Abode.)

Uttering these words the thumbs of both the hands should be touched with their index-fingers.

राम राम कहि जे जमुहाहीं। तिन्हहि न पाप पुंज समुहाहीं॥
तर्जनीभ्यां नमः॥

(Multitudes of sins dare not stand in the presence of those who utter the name 'Rāma' even while yawning.)

Uttering this the index-fingers of both the hands should be touched with their thumbs.

राम सकल नामन्ह ते अधिका। होउ नाथ अघ खग गन बधिका॥
मध्यमाभ्यां नमः॥

(May Your appellation 'Rama', O Lord, excel all other divine names and play the role of a fowler in respect of birds in the form of sins.)

Uttering this the middle fingers of both the hands should be touched with their thumbs.

उमा दारु जोषित की नाईं। सबहि नचावत रामु गोसाईं॥
अनामिकाभ्यां नमः॥

(Bhagavan Śrī Rāma makes the whole creation dance like a wooden doll, O Parvatī.)

Uttering this the ring-fingers of both the hands should be touched with their thumbs.

सन्मुख होइ जीव मोहि जबहीं। जन्म कोटि अघ नासहिं तबहीं॥
कनिष्ठिकाभ्यां नमः॥

(The moment a creature turns its face towards Me—says the Lord—the sins committed by it through millions of births are dissolved then and there.)

Uttering this the little fingers of both the hands should be touched by their thumbs.

मामभिरक्षय रघुकुलनायक। धृत बर चाप रुचिर कर सायक॥
करतलकरपृष्ठाभ्यां नमः॥

(Protect me, O Chief of Raghu's race, holding as You do an excellent bow and a brilliant arrow in Your hands.)

Uttering this the palms and backs of both the hands should be touched one after another each with the other hand.

ANGANYASA

In *Anganyāsa* the heart and other parts of the body are touched with all

the fingers of the right hand joined together.

जग मंगल गुनग्राम राम के। दानि मुकुति धन धरम धाम के॥
हृदयाय नमः ॥

Uttering this the heart should be touched with all the five fingers of the right hand.

Similarly the forehead should be touched after uttering the following line:—

राम राम कहि जे जमुहाहीं। तिन्हहि न पाप पुंज समुहाहीं॥
शिरसे स्वाहा॥

The tuft of hair on the head should then be touched after uttering the following line:—

राम सकल नामन्ह ते अधिका। होउ नाथ अघ खग गन बधिका॥
शिखायै वषट्॥

After uttering the following line the right shoulder should be touched with the fingers of the left hand and *vice versa*:—

उमा दारु जोषित की नाईं। सबहि नचावत रामु गोसाईं॥
कवचाय हुम्॥

After uttering the following line both the eyes should be touched with the finger-tips of the right hand:—

सन्मुख होइ जीव मोहि जबहीं। जन्म कोटि अघ नासहिं तबहीं॥
नेत्राभ्यां वौषट्॥

After uttering the following line the right hand should be taken round the head counter-clockwise from the forehead to the back of the head and back to the forehead, and the palm of the left hand should be struck with the index and middle fingers of the right.

मामभिरक्षय रघुकुलनायक। धृत बर चाप रुचिर कर सायक॥
अस्त्राय फट्॥

DHYANA

The form of the Lord should then be meditated upon with the help of the following lines:—

मामवलोकय पंकजलोचन। कृपा बिलोकनि सोच बिमोचन॥
नील तामरस स्याम काम अरि। हृदय कंज मकरंद मधुप हरि॥
जातुधान बरूथ बल भंजन। मुनि सज्जन रंजन अघ गंजन॥
भूसुर ससि नव बृंद बलाहक। असरन सरन दीन जन गाहक॥
भुजबल बिपुल भार महि खंडित। खर दूषन बिराध बध पंडित॥
रावनारि सुखरूप भूपबर। जय दसरथ कुल कुमुद सुधाकर॥
सुजस पुरान बिदित निगमागम। गावत सुर मुनि संत समागम॥
कारुनीक ब्यलीक मद खंडन। सब बिधि कुसल कोसला मंडन॥
कलि मल मथन नाम ममताहन। तुलसिदास प्रभु पाहि प्रनत जन॥

(Look at me, O Lord with lotus-like eyes! You rid the devotee of sorrow by Your gracious look. You are swarthy of hue like the blue lotus, O Hari, and a bee as it were drinking in the nectarean love of the lotus-like heart of Lord Śiva (an avowed enemy of the god of love). You crush the might of the demon hosts, delight the sages and saints and wipe out sins. You are a mass of fresh clouds for the crop in the form of the Brahmans (the gods on this earth), the refuge of the forlorn and a befriender of the humble. You relieve the burden of the earth by the enormous strength of Your arm and are an adept in killing the demons Khara, Dūṣaṇa and Virādha. An enemy of the demon king Rāvaṇa and bliss personified, You are the noblest of kings. Glory to You, who are as a moon to the lily-like race of Daśaratha. Your bright glory is known to the Purāṇas, Vedas and Tantras, and is sung by gods, sages and the assemblages of saints. Full of compassion, You crush false pride and are perfect in every way, O Ornament of Ayodhyā. Your Name wipes out the impurities of this sinful age and curbs the feeling of meum. Protect this humble devotee, O Lord of Tulasīdāsa.)

N. B. The pauses for a nine-day and thirty-day recitation have been noted in the body of the text itself and have therefore not been separately mentioned.

What does the Ramayana teach us?

By Hanumanprasad Poddar

1. God alone, who is absolute Existence, pure Intelligence and infinite Bliss, is projected everywhere. The whole universe as well as all that is going on in the universe are His manifestation and play.

2. The Supreme Deity bodies Himself forth from time to time with a view to redeeming the virtuous through love and the evil-doers by punishment, and plays the role of an Ideal Man for the good of humanity.

3. Surrender to the Lord is the best means of attaining salvation. Vibhīṣaṇa is a typical example of such surrender.

4. Truth is the highest religion; one should cheerfully renounce power and pelf, nay, one's very life, for the sake of truth. The life of Śrī Rāma is an embodiment of truth.

5. God-Realization is the highest goal of human existence and this can be attained by dedicating oneself to the Lord and performing one's duties for Him alone, without attachment to the fruit and in a spirit of renunciation.

6. It is the foremost duty of those who believe in the institution of Varṇāśrama to follow the rules of Varṇāśramadharma.

7. It is the paramount duty of a son to serve his parents. This is exemplified in the life of Śrī Rāma.

8. Supreme and undivided devotion to her husband is the highest duty of a wife. Śrī Sītā was a living embodiment of such devotion.

9. It is the highest duty of a man to make his brothers happy. Śrī Rāma, Bharata, Lakṣmaṇa and Śatrughna should be regarded as ideal brothers.

10. It is the foremost duty of the people to serve their ruler even at the cost of their own lives. This was exemplified by (1) the people of Ayodhyā at the time of Śrī Rama's departure for the forest and (2) by the monkey-subjects of King Sugrīva, who laid down their lives in the war between Śrī Rama and Rāvaṇa.

11. One should never lend countenance to the wrong-doings of an unjust and unrighteous ruler. It is our sacred duty to raise our voice against such a ruler, no matter if he is our real brother. This is exemplified in the life of Vibhīṣaṇa.

12. It is the paramount duty of a ruler to renounce his dearest object in order to please his subjects. Śrī Rāma's abandoning of Sīta is a noble example of this.

13. A ruler should give away his all in performing sacrifices for the welfare of his subjects. This is exemplified in the lives of King Daśaratha and Bhagavān Śrī Rāma.

14. The mightiest monarch will surely meet with his end if he offends against the sacred laws of morality and commits outrage on women. The case of Rāvaṇa can be cited by way of an example.

15. One should be prepared to lay down one's very life for the sake of a friend and should help him in every way. The friendship of Śrī Rāma and Sugrīva, on the one hand, and of Śrī Rāma and Vibhīṣaṇa, on the other, should be recognized as ideal in this respect.

16. A devotee should always keep himself engaged in serving the Lord in a disinterested spirit. This is fully exemplified in the life of Śrī Hanumān.

17. An ideal wife should love her step-children in the same way as her own progeny. This is exemplified in the lives of Kausalya and Sumitrā.

18. The Brahmans (the priestly class) as well as hermits should always be honoured by means of gifts and respectful behaviour. This is exemplified in the life of Śrī Rāma.

19. One should spend one's spare moments in talking of the Lord or dwelling in one's mind on noble thoughts. This was done by Śrī Rāma and His brothers whenever they met together.

20. One should prostrate oneself at the feet of one's teacher, parents, elder brother and so on every morning.

21. One should offer oblations of water (*Tarpaṇa*) and food (*Śrāddha*) to one's ancestors with reverence.

22. One should always and in every circumstance raise one's voice against injustice. This is exemplified in the life of Lakṣmaṇa.

23. One should undergo the severest ordeal for the sake of duty. This is exemplified in the lives of Śrī Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Sītā and Bharata.

24. Every member of the twice-born classes should perform his Sandhyā (morning and evening prayers) at the right time every day.

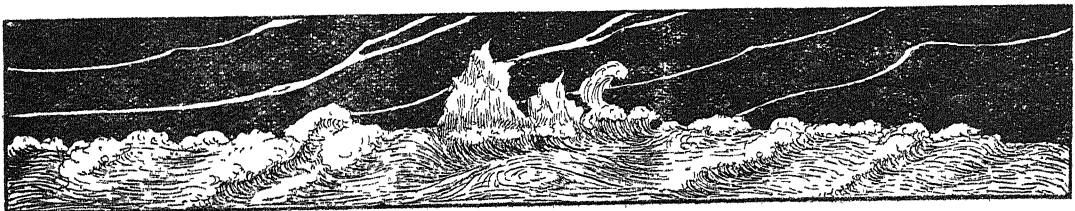
25. One should always be fearless. Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were living embodiments of fearlessness.

26. One should never marry more women than one. The life of Śrī Rāma should be taken as an ideal in this respect.

27. One should be ever ready to help sages and anchorites in performing their religious rites without interference from outside. This is exemplified in the lives of Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa.

28. One should mete out a friendly treatment even to those who do one wrong. The behaviour of Śrī Rāma towards Kaikeyī should be taken as an ideal in this respect.

29. One should love the meanest of creatures. This is exemplified in the life of Śrī Rāma.

30. By taking refuge at the feet of the Lord and bearing their dust on its head, even an inanimate object can become animate. The case of Ahalyā can be cited by way of example.

An Appreciation of the Tulasikrita Ramayana

—By Edwin Greaves

For a foreigner to pose as a critic of the works of the great Hindi poets might well be regarded as an impertinence; but perhaps he may venture to lay a wreath of appreciation at the feet of the greatest of them all, the Gusāin Tulasīdās, whose *Rāmāyaṇa* he has known for very many years.

Tulasīdās wrote much, and nothing that he has written can be lightly esteemed; but not all the works that have been attributed to him are accepted by Hindi scholars as authentic. It is therefore possible that a few of the less valued poems which bear his name are not by Tulasīdās and cannot, therefore, be brought forward as evidence of the lapses of a great writer.

Of all his works the *Rāmāyaṇa* or *Rāmacharitamānasa* may be regarded as holding the place of pre-eminence. I remember one great Hindi scholar hesitating to accept this conclusion, considering that the highest place should be given to the *Binaya-Patrikā*. The *Binaya-Patrikā* doubtless displays special abilities which are not so conspicuous in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, but the book must remain a sacred enclosure for the initiated few. Very many are capable of appreciating the *Rāmāyana*, who have not the knowledge rightly to value or even to understand fully the somewhat involved and intricate stanzas of the *Binaya-Patrikā*.

An outstanding feature of the *Rāmacharitamānasa* is that it appeals to all classes of people, even to those who cannot read but are only listeners. It delights the simple villager, it is no less a joy to the scholar. The story is marvellously well told and sustains the interest of the reader right through; it fascinates by its rich glow, its wealth of imagery, its vivid language, its music, its grace and felicity of expression. Its levels of excellence may vary; but the writer never drivels (as some really fine poets do under bilious attacks), and the book comes to us as a gloriously well-rounded whole.

The question very naturally arises: What qualities does the Tulasīkṛta *Rāmāyaṇa* possess, which have won for it such a well-secured pre-eminence in Hindi Literature ?

With some hesitation the writer hazards the attempt to give something in the way of an answer to this question, though by no means an exhaustive one.

1. The poet's mind is engrossed in his subject, not in himself. His concern is to direct the reader's attention to Rāma—his greatness and his goodness, and not to the cleverness of the writer. His devotion to Rama simply floods all his verses, they are saturated with his passionate affection for his lord and master. He writes not to procure fame for himself but to make secure the glory of Rāmachandra and Sītā.

2. With this end in view he makes it his great aim to be intelligible. He is out to make the reader understand—and not to compel him to admire the writer's learning or skill or dexterity.

The whole passage in which this matter is touched on, and in which he

discloses his intention to use the simple *Bhāṣā,* is exceedingly interesting.

भाषा भनिति भोरि मति मोरी।
हँसिबे जोग हँसें नहिं खोरी॥
प्रभु पद प्रीति न सामुझि नीकी।
तिन्हहि कथा सुनि लागिहि फीकी॥
हरि हर पद रति मति न कुतरकी।
तिन्ह कहुँ मधुर कथा रघुबर की॥

There are doubtless many verses which present difficulties to a foreign reader, possibly some which are not easy for every Indian reader; but any such obscurities arise from the subject-matter: the poet does not lay himself out to impress the student with the author's profundity and erudition. One of the great charms of the poem is the simplicity of the language. The writer is intent on being "understood of the common" people; his aim is to make Rāma popular, not to advertise Tulasīdās.

3. Another remarkable feature of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is the great variety of the fare, the freedom from monotony. The combination of metres is very happy. Very largely there are four *chaupāīs* followed by a *dohā,* though occasionally the grouping of the *chaupāīs* and *dohās* is different. A change is rung by the insertion of *soraṭhās* from time to time, which gives a certain piquancy. A further relief is offered by the introduction of *chhandas,* and these of more than one kind. These *chhandas* add greatly to the beauty of the work. At times they are deeply impressive by the sublimity of their matter and language. Take, for instance, the *chhanda* commencing—

जय जय सुरनायक जन सुखदायक प्रनतपाल भगवंता।

in the *Bālakāṇḍa.* In other places these *chhandas* are resonant with the clash of conflict and the wild confusion of the death struggles of fierce combatants, as in the *Lankākāṇḍa.*

Further variety is obtained by the adoption of a tolerably wide vocabulary and a delightful ringing of changes in the forms of words, often necessitated by the number of instants demanded by the line. The Gusāin possessed an almost magical power of making any word fit into any place, lengthening it or shortening it, compressing it or twisting its tail, or crushing its head between its shoulders, and yet readily recognizable in spite of all its transformation. I have noted eleven different forms of the word '*Aisā*' and similar variations might be discovered in the pronouns and in other words and particles. Occasionally alliteration is indulged in. Perhaps the best illustration of this is a line in the *Chhanda* referred to above; it runs:—

जो भव भय भंजन जन मन रंजन गंजन बिपति बरूथा।

The poet manifests exquisite taste in the adoptation of words and phraseology and *swing* of the metre to the matter being presented and offers a luxurious wealth of variety in the way of भाव and रस. It would be well-nigh impossible to make a list of all the classes of subjects dealt with and the emotions seeking expression. The presentation of the characters is distinctly dramatic. It is true that to the Western mind some of the situations may appear to be somewhat strained and the emotions and the language in which they find expression a little overwrought: but this need not diminish our admiration for the dramatic presentation of the various interesting people to whom the reader is introduced.

The poet appears to be equally at home in quiet narrative, in the portrayal of domestic felicity—and infelicity (alas ! poor Kaikeyī)—, in the brunt of battle, in the tender relationships between parents and children, between brothers and between husband and wife. Perhaps one of the finest things in the whole book is the part recording the conversation between Rāma and Sītā before they set out for their long exile. He bravely strives to spare her the hardships of the life which lies before him and leave her cared for at home; she is equally bravely intent on sharing the sufferings of her husband, be they what they may. She does not pose as doing the difficult thing loyally, as a mere matter of duty; she urges her suit in a far more winsome way: the forest hardships shared with her lord will be heaven, the palace without him will be hell.

4. The humour of Tulasīdās deserves a section to itself. In life and literature humour counts for so much. In any philosophy of life the absence of humour means a defect of tremendous importance. Passages of almost boisterous humour readily recur to one's mind. Take, for instance, the bluster of Paraśurāma and the bubbling fun of Lakṣmaṇa as he replies to his anger; or notice again the courting of Lakṣmaṇa by Śūrpaṇakhā and his banter in replying to her advances. The story of Hanumān and his tail at the palace in Lankā is bristling with rollicking humour. The same is true of the description of Śiva's gruesome crowd of followers (in the *Bālakāṇḍa*). Many passages from the *Lankākāṇḍa* might be cited, which have something approaching a grim and even weird humour running through them. Sometimes the humour is combined with piercingly keen irony. Am I wrong in finding a very outstanding illustration of this in the line—

समरथ कहुँ नहिं दोष गोसाईं ।

Some would take this as not irony but to be literally interpreted in all seriousness.

Tastes differ in poetry as in much else. To some readers Bihari Lal makes a strong appeal. He is certainly a marvellous word-juggler, but beyond this what qualities of a poet are to be found in *Satsaī* ? Sūrdās proves very fascinating to others. No one would belittle his literary grace and charm or doubt the music of his verses; but one is tempted to recall Thomas Carlyle's remark about Macaulay's faultless English, ..."Flow on, thou shining river." Sūrdās lives on a high plateau with wondrous flowers and fruits, but does not the country get a little tame? The level is a high level, but would not a few precipices and crags be bracing ? Kabīr had greatness of a kind. Probably no poet could say so much in so few words. For the power of compression and for rough rugged strong phrases he is unequalled; and his couplets contain so much sound practical philosophy. But Kabīr and Tulasīdās have not enough in common to invite a comparison between the two.

Many poets have enriched Hindi Literature, but surely Tulasīdās stands out as the greatest of them all. Others may possess single excellences in a slightly higher degree; but Tulasīdās combines so many and so great excellences and there is such a brave and gentle spirit permeating the whole of his *Rāmāyaṇa*. He is worthy not only of our admiration but also of our love, and he is loved; and certainly there is no Hindi book so widely found in palace and in hut and so greatly treasured.

ॐ

Sri Ramacharitamanasa

(The Mānasa lake containing the exploits of Śrī Rāma)

Descent One

(Balakanda)

श्लोक

वर्णानामर्थसङ्घानां रसानां छन्दसामपि ।
मङ्गलानां च कर्त्तारौ वन्दे वाणीविनायकौ ॥ १ ॥

I reverence Vānī (the goddess of speech) and Vināyaka (Lord Ganeśa), the originators of sounds represented by the alphabet, of the multitudes of objects denoted by those sounds, of poetic sentiments as well as of metres, and the begetters of all blessings. (1)

भवानीशङ्करौ वन्दे श्रद्धाविश्वासरूपिणौ ।
याभ्यां विना न पश्यन्ति सिद्धाः स्वान्तःस्थमीश्वरम् ॥ २ ॥

I greet goddess Pārvatī and Her consort, Bhagavān Śankara, embodiments of reverence and faith respectively, without which even the adept cannot perceive God enshrined in their very heart. (2)

वन्दे बोधमयं नित्यं गुरुं शङ्कररूपिणम् ।
यमाश्रितो हि वक्रोऽपि चन्द्रः सर्वत्र वन्द्यते ॥ ३ ॥

I make obeisance to the eternal preceptor in the form of Lord Śankara, who is all wisdom, and resting on whose brow the crescent moon, though crooked in shape, is universally adored. (3)

सीतारामगुणग्रामपुण्यारण्यविहारिणौ ।
वन्दे विशुद्धविज्ञानौ कवीश्वरकपीश्वरौ ॥ ४ ॥

I pay homage to the king of bards (Vālmīki) and the chief of monkeys (Hanumān), of pure intelligence, both of whom sport in the holy woods in the shape of glories of Sītā and Rāma. (4)

उद्भवस्थितिसंहारकारिणीं क्लेशहारिणीम् ।
सर्वश्रेयस्करीं सीतां नतोऽहं रामवल्लभाम् ॥ ५ ॥

I bow to Sītā, the beloved consort of Śrī Rāma, who is responsible for the creation, sustenance and dissolution (of the universe), removes afflictions and begets all blessings. (5)

यन्मायावशवर्त्ति विश्वमखिलं ब्रह्मादिदेवासुरा यत्सत्त्वादमृषैव भाति सकलं रज्जौ यथाहेर्भ्रमः ।
यत्पादप्लवमेकमेव हि भवाम्भोधेस्तितीर्षावतां वन्देऽहं तमशेषकारणपरं रामाख्यमीशं हरिम् ॥ ६ ॥

I adore Lord Hari, known by the name of Śrī Rāma, who is superior to and lies beyond all causes, whose Māyā (illusive power) holds sway over the entire universe including gods from Brahmā (the Creator) downwards and demons, whose presence lends positive reality to the world of appearances,—even as the false notion of a serpent is entertained with reference to a rope,—and whose feet are the only bark for those who are eager to cross the ocean of mundane existence. (6)

नानापुराणनिगमागमसम्मतं यद् रामायणे निगदितं क्वचिदन्यतोऽपि ।
स्वान्तःसुखाय तुलसी रघुनाथगाथाभाषानिबन्धमतिमञ्जुलमातनोति ॥ ७ ॥

For the gratification of his own self Tulasīdāsa brings forth this very elegant composition relating in common parlance the story of the Lord of Raghus, which is in accord with the various Purāṇas, Vedas and the Āgamas (Tantras), and incorporates what has been recorded in the Rāmāyaṇa (of Vālmīki) and culled from some other sources (7)

सो०—जो सुमिरत सिधि होइ गन नायक करिबर बदन ।
करउ अनुग्रह सोइ बुद्धि रासि सुभ गुन सदन ॥ १ ॥

May Lord Gaṇeśa, the leader of Śiva's retinue, whose very thought ensures success, who carries on his shoulders the head of a beautiful elephant, who is a repository of wisdom and an abode of blessed qualities, shower his grace (1)

मूक होइ बाचाल पंगु चढ़इ गिरिबर गहन ।
जासु कृपाँ सो दयाल द्रवउ सकल कलि मल दहन ॥ २ ॥

May that merciful Lord, whose grace enables the dumb to wax eloquent and a cripple to ascend an inaccessible mountain, and who burns all the impurities of the Kali age, be moved to pity. (2)

नील सरोरुह स्याम तरुन अरुन बारिज नयन ।
करउ सो मम उर धाम सदा छीरसागर सयन ॥ ३ ॥

May the Lord who ever sleeps on the ocean of milk, and who is swarthy as a blue lotus and has eyes resembling a pair of full-blown red lotuses, take up His abode in my bosom. (3)

कुंद इंदु सम देह उमा रमन करुना अयन ।
जाहि दीन पर नेह करउ कृपा मर्दन मयन ॥ ४ ॥

May the crusher of Cupid, Bhagavān Śiva, whose form resembles in colour the jasmine flower and the moon, who is the consort of goddess Pārvatī and an abode of compassion and who is fond of the afflicted, be gracious. (4)

बंदउँ गुरु पद कंज कृपा सिंधु नररूप हरि ।
महामोह तम पुंज जासु बचन रबि कर निकर ॥ ५ ॥

I bow to the lotus feet of my Guru, who is an ocean of mercy and is no other than Śrī Hari Himself in human form, and whose words are sunbeams as it were for dispersing the mass of darkness in the form of gross ignorance. (5)

चौ०—बंदउँ गुरु पद पदुम परागा । सुरुचि सुबास सरस अनुरागा ॥
अमिअ मूरिमय चूरन चारू । समन सकल भव रुज परिवारू ॥ १ ॥
सुकृति संभु तन बिमल बिभूती । मंजुल मंगल मोद प्रसूती ॥
जन मन मंजु मुकुर मल हरनी । किएँ तिलक गुन गन बस करनी ॥ २ ॥
श्रीगुर पद नख मनि गन जोती । सुमिरत दिब्य दृष्टि हियँ होती ॥
दलन मोह तम सो सप्रकासू । बड़े भाग उर आवइ जासू ॥ ३ ॥
उघरहिं बिमल बिलोचन ही के । मिटहिं दोष दुख भव रजनी के ॥
सूझहिं राम चरित मनि मानिक । गुपुत प्रगट जहँ जो जेहि खानिक ॥ ४ ॥

I greet the pollen-like dust of the lotus feet of my preceptor, refulgent, fragrant and flavoured with love. It is a lovely powder of the life-giving herb, which allays the host of all the attendant ills of mundane existence. It adorns the body of a lucky person even as white ashes beautify the person of Lord Śiva, and brings forth sweet blessings and joys. It rubs the dirt off the beautiful mirror in the shape of the devotee's heart, when applied to the forehead in the form of a Tilak (a religious mark), it attracts a host of virtues. The splendour of gems in the form of nails on the feet of the blessed Guru unfolds divine vision in the heart by its very thought. The lustre disperses the shades of infatuation; highly blessed is he in whose bosom it shines. With its very appearance the bright eyes of the mind get opened; the attendant evils and sufferings of the night of mundane existence disappear; and gems and rubies in the shape of stories of Śrī Rāma, both patent and hidden, wherever and in whatever mine they may be, come to light— (1—4)

दो०—जथा सुअंजन अंजि दृग साधक सिद्ध सुजान ।
कौतुक देखत सैल बन भूतल भूरि निधान ॥ १ ॥

—as, for instance, by applying to the eyes the miraculous salve known by the name of Siddhāñjana (the eye-salve of perfection) strivers, adepts as well as men of wisdom easily discover a host of mines on hill-tops, in the midst of forests and in the bowels of the earth (1)

चौ०—गुरु पद रज मृदु मंजुल अंजन । नयन अमिअ दृग दोष बिभंजन ॥
तेहिं करि बिमल बिबेक बिलोचन । बरनउँ राम चरित भव मोचन ॥ १ ॥
बंदउँ प्रथम महीसुर चरना । मोह जनित संसय सब हरना ॥
सुजन समाज सकल गुन खानी । करउँ प्रनाम सप्रेम सुबानी ॥ २ ॥
साधु चरित सुभ चरित कपासू । निरस बिसद गुनमय फल जासू ॥
जो सहि दुख परछिद्र दुरावा । बंदनीय जेहिं जग जस पावा ॥ ३ ॥
मुद मंगलमय संत समाजू । जो जग जंगम तीरथराजू ॥
राम भक्ति जहँ सुरसरि धारा । सरसइ ब्रह्म बिचार प्रचारा ॥ ४ ॥
बिधि निषेधमय कलि मल हरनी । करम कथा रबिनंदनि बरनी ॥
हरि हर कथा बिराजति बेनी । सुनत सकल मुद मंगल देनी ॥ ५ ॥
बटु बिस्वास अचल निज धरमा । तीरथराज समाज सुकरमा ॥
सबहि सुलभ सब दिन सब देसा । सेवत सादर समन कलेसा ॥ ६ ॥
अकथ अलौकिक तीरथराऊ । देइ सद्य फल प्रगट प्रभाऊ ॥ ७ ॥

The dust of the Guru's feet is a soft and agreeable salve, which is ambrosia as it were for the eyes and remedies the defects of vision. Having brightened my eyes of discernment thereby I proceed to relate the story of Śrī Rāma, which secures freedom from the bondage of mundane existence. First I reverence the feet of Brahmans, the very gods on earth, who are able to dispel all doubts born of ignorance. Then I make loving obeisance, in a polite language, to the whole body of pious souls, the mines of all virtues. The conduct of holy men is noble as the career of the cotton plant, the fruit whereof is tasteless, white and fibrous (even as the doings of saints yield results which are free from attachment, stainless and full of goodness)*. Even by suffering hardships (in the form of ginning, spinning and weaving) the cotton plant covers others' faults and has thereby earned in the world a renown which is worthy of adoration. The assemblage of saints, which is all joy and felicity, is a moving Prayāga (the king of all holy places) as it were. Devotion to Śrī Rāma represents, in this moving Prayāga, the stream of the holy Gangā, the river of the celestials; while the proceeding of an enquiry into the nature of Brahma (the Absolute) constitutes the Saraswatī (a subterranean stream which is traditionally believed to join the Gangā and the Yamunā at Prayāga, thus accounting for the name 'Triveṇī', which signifies a meeting-place of three rivers). Discourses on Karma or Action, consisting of injunctions and interdictions, have been spoken of as the sacred Yamunā,—a daughter of the sun-god in her angelic form—washing the impurities of the Kali age; while the anecdotes of Viṣṇu and Śiva stand out as the triple stream known as Triveṇī, bringing joy and blessings to those who listen to them. Unwavering faith in their own creed constitutes the immortal banyan tree and noble actions represent the royal court of that king of holy places. Easy of access to all on any day and at every place, this moving Prayāga assuages the afflictions of those who resort to it with reverence This king

* The fruit of the cotton plant has been characterized in the original as 'Nirasa', 'Viśada' and 'Guṇamaya', which words can be interpreted both ways as in the rendering given above.

of holy places is beyond all description and supra-mundane in character, it bestows the reward immediately and its glory is manifest (1—7)

दो०—सुनि समुझहिं जन मुदित मन मज्जहिं अति अनुराग ।
लहहिं चारि फल अछत तनु साधु समाज प्रयाग ॥ २ ॥

Men who having heard the glory of this moving Prayāga in the form of the assemblage of holy men appreciate it with an enraptured mind and then take a plunge into it with extreme devotion obtain the four rewards* of human existence during their very lifetime. (2)

चौ०—मज्जन फल पेखिअ ततकाला । काक होहिं पिक बकउ मराला ॥
सुनि आचरज करै जनि कोई । सतसंगति महिमा नहिं गोई ॥ १ ॥
बालमीक नारद घटजोनी । निज निज मुखनि कही निज होनी ॥
जलचर थलचर नभचर नाना । जे जड़ चेतन जीव जहाना ॥ २ ॥
मति कीरति गति भूति भलाई । जब जेहिं जतन जहाँ जेहिं पाई ॥
सो जानब सतसंग प्रभाऊ । लोकहुँ बेद न आन उपाऊ ॥ ३ ॥
बिनु सतसंग बिबेक न होई । राम कृपा बिनु सुलभ न सोई ॥
सतसंगत मुद मंगल मूला । सोइ फल सिधि सब साधन फूला ॥ ४ ॥
सठ सुधरहिं सतसंगति पाई । पारस परस कुधात सुहाई ॥
बिधि बस सुजन कुसंगत परहीं । फनि मनि सम निज गुन अनुसरहीं ॥ ५ ॥
बिधि हरि हर कबि कोबिद बानी । कहत साधु महिमा सकुचानी ॥
सो मो सन कहि जात न कैसें । साक बनिक मनि गुन गन जैसें ॥ ६ ॥

The result of an immersion into the sacred waters of this king of holy places is instantly perceived: crows turn into cuckoos and herons into swans Let no one marvel to hear this, the glory of contact with saints is no secret. Vālmīki †, Nārada ‡ and Agastya §, who was born of a pitcher, have related the story of their birth and transformation with their own lips. Of the various creatures, both animate and inanimate, living in this world, whether in water or on land or in the air, whoever has ever attained wisdom, glory, salvation, material prosperity or welfare anywhere and by any means whatsoever, know it to be the result of association with holy men; there is

* The four rewards of human existence are: (1) Dharma or religious merit, (2) Artha or material riches, (3) Kāma or sensuous enjoyment and (4) Mokṣa or release from the bondage of worldly existence.

† Vālmīki had been a hunter and a highway robber in his early life. He was reclaimed by the seven seers and eventually turned out a great seer and poet.

‡ We read in the *Bhāgavata* that Nārada was the son of a maid-servant in his previous incarnation and even as a child came in touch with holy men, who imparted him the highest wisdom and made him a real devotee by their very contact. In his next birth he appeared as a mind-born son of Brahmā.

§ Agastya was begotten of god Varuṇa through a pitcher. Another great sage, Vasiṣṭha, was also born of the same pitcher. The association thus obtained in his embryonic state with a great sage made him equally great.

no other means either in the world or in the Vedas. Wisdom dawns not without association with saints and such association cannot be easily had without the grace of Śrī Rāma. Contact with noble souls is the root of joy and blessings, it constitutes the very fruit and fulfilment of all endeavours, whereas all other practices are blossoms as it were. Through contact with the virtuous even the wicked get reformed, just as a base metal is transmuted by the touch of the philosopher's stone On the other hand, if by mischance good men fall into evil company, they maintain their noble character like the gem on the hood of a serpent. Even the speech of deities like Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, poets and men of wisdom falters in depicting the glory of pious souls Much less can it be described by me, even as a dealer in vegetables finds himself incapable of expatiating on the qualities of gems.

(1—6)

दो०—बंदउँ संत समान चित हित अनहित नहिं कोइ ।
अंजलि गत सुभ सुमन जिमि सम सुगंध कर दोइ ॥ ३ (क) ॥
संत सरल चित जगत हित जानि सुभाउ सनेहु ।
बालबिनय सुनि करि कृपा राम चरन रति देहु ॥ ३ (ख) ॥

I bow to the saints, who are evenminded towards all and have no friend or foe, just as a flower of good quality placed in the palm of one's hands communicates its fragrance alike to both the hands (the one which plucked it and that which held and preserved it). Realizing thus the noble disposition and loving nature of saints, who are innocent at heart and catholic in spirit, I make this humble submission to them. Listening to my childlike prayer and taking compassion on me, O noble souls, bless me with devotion to the feet of Śrī Rāma.

(3 A-B)

चौ०—बहुरि बंदि खल गन सतिभाएँ । जे बिनु काज दाहिनेहु बाएँ ॥
पर हित हानि लाभ जिन्ह केरें । उजरें हरष बिषाद बसेरें ॥ १ ॥
हरि हर जस राकेस राहु से । पर अकाज भट सहसबाहु से ॥
जे पर दोष लखहिं सहसाखी । पर हित घृत जिन्ह के मन माखी ॥ २ ॥
तेज कृसानु रोष महिषेसा । अघ अवगुन धन धनी धनेसा ॥
उदय केत सम हित सबही के । कुंभकरन सम सोवत नीके ॥ ३ ॥
पर अकाजु लगि तनु परिहरहीं । जिमि हिम उपल कृषी दलि गरहीं ॥
बंदउँ खल जस सेष सरोषा । सहस बदन बरनइ पर दोषा ॥ ४ ॥
पुनि प्रनवउँ पृथुराज समाना । पर अघ सुनइ सहस दस काना ॥
बहुरि सक्र सम बिनवउँ तेही । संतत सुरानीक हित जेही ॥ ५ ॥
बचन बज्र जेहि सदा पिआरा । सहस नयन पर दोष निहारा ॥ ६ ॥

Again, I greet with a sincere heart the malevolent class, who are hostile without purpose even to the friendly, to whom others' loss is their own gain, and who delight in others' desolation and wail over their prosperity. They try to eclipse the glory of Viṣṇu and Śiva even as the demon Rāhu intercepts

the light of the full moon (during what is known as the lunar eclipse); and they are valiant like the reputed King Sahasrabāhu* (so-called because of his possessing a thousand arms) in working others' woe They detect others' faults as if with a thousand eyes and their (designing) mind mars others' interests even as a fly spoils clarified butter. In splendour they emulate the god of fire and in anger they vie with the god of death, who rides a buffalo. They are rich in crime and vice as Kubera, the god of riches, is in gold. Like the rise of a comet their advancement augurs ill for others' interests; like the slumber of Kumbhakarna † their decline alone is propitious for the world They lay down their very life in order to be able to harm others, even as hail-stones dissolve after destroying the crop. I reverence a wicked soul as the fiery (thousand-tongued) serpent-god Śeṣa, in so far as he eagerly expatiates on others' faults with a thousand tongues as it were. Again, I bow to him as the celebrated King Pṛthu (who prayed for ten thousand ears in order to be able to hear the glories of the Lord to his heart's content) inasmuch as he hears of others' faults with ten thousand ears as it were. Once more do I supplicate to him as Indra (the lord of celestials) in so far as wine appears charming and beneficial to him (even as the army of gods is beneficent to Indra)‡. Harsh language is dear to him even as the thunderbolt is fondly cherished by Indra; and he detects others' faults with a thousand eyes as it were. (1—6)

दो०—उदासीन अरि मीत हित सुनत जरहिं खल रीति ।
जानि पानि जुग जोरि जन बिनती करइ सप्रीति ॥ ४ ॥

The wicked burn with jealousy as they hear of others' welfare, be they his friends, foes or neutrals· such is their wont. Knowing thus, this humble soul makes loving entreaties to them with joined palms. (4)

चौ०—मैं अपनी दिसि कीन्ह निहोरा । तिन्ह निज ओर न लाउब भोरा ॥
बायस पलिअहिं अति अनुरागा । होहिं निरामिष कबहुँ कि कागा ॥ १ ॥
बंदउँ संत असज्जन चरना । दुखप्रद उभय बीच कछु बरना ॥
बिछुरत एक प्रान हरि लेहीं । मिलत एक दुख दारुन देहीं ॥ २ ॥
उपजहिं एक संग जग माहीं । जलज जोंक जिमि गुन बिलगाहीं ॥
सुधा सुरा सम साधु असाधू । जनक एक जग जलधि अगाधू ॥ ३ ॥
भल अनभल निज निज करतूती । लहत सुजस अपलोक बिभूती ॥

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* Sahasrabāhu was a mighty warrior and a contemporary of Rāvaṇa, who was once captured and held captive by him. He was slain by Paraśurāma.

† Kumbhakarṇa was a younger brother to Rāvaṇa, the demon-king of Laṅkā. He was a voracious eater and consumed a large number of goats and buffaloes every day. He kept awake for six months and slept during the other half-year. Living beings thus obtained a fresh lease of life during the period of his slumber.

‡ There is a pun on the expression 'Surānīka' in the original. 'Surānīka' (Sura+Anīka) is a compound word in Sanskrit, meaning the army of the gods. In Hindi it can as well be treated as two separate words 'Surā' (wine) and 'Nīka' (charming). Hence it has been interpreted both ways in the above rendering.

सुधा सुधाकर सुरसरि साधू । गरल अनल कलिमल सरि ब्याधू ॥ ४ ॥
गुन अवगुन जानत सब कोई । जो जेहि भाव नीक तेहि सोई ॥ ५ ॥

I for my part have made entreaties to them, they too must not fail to do their part. However fondly you may nurture a brood of crows, can you ever expect ravens to turn vegetarians? I adore the feet of a saint and a wicked soul, both of whom give pain, though some difference is said to exist between them. Whereas the former class cause mortal pain while parting, the latter give agonizing torment during their meeting. Though born together in the world, they differ in their traits even as the lotus and the leech (both of which spring from water). The good and the wicked resemble nectar and wine respectively; the unfathomable ocean in the form of this world is their common parent* The good and the wicked gather a rich harvest of good reputation and infamy by their respective doings. Although the merits of nectar, the moon—the seat of nectar,—the Gangā—the river of the celestials—and a pious soul, on the one hand, and the demerits of venom, fire, the unholy river Karmanāśā—which is said to be full of the impurities of the Kali age—and the hunter, on the other, are known to all, only that which is to a man's taste appears good to him.
(1—5)

दो०—भलो भलाइहि पै लहइ लहइ निचाइहि नीचु ।
सुधा सराहिअ अमरताँ गरल सराहिअ मीचु ॥ ५ ॥

Of course, a good man has a bias for goodness alone, while a vile person is prone to vileness. While nectar is praised for its immortalizing virtue, poison is extolled for its deadly effects.
(5)

चौ०—खल अघ अगुन साधु गुन गाहा । उभय अपार उदधि अवगाहा ॥
तेहि तें कछु गुन दोष बखाने । संग्रह त्याग न बिनु पहिचाने ॥ १ ॥
भलेउ पोच सब बिधि उपजाए । गनि गुन दोष बेद बिलगाए ॥
कहहिं बेद इतिहास पुराना । बिधि प्रपंचु गुन अवगुन साना ॥ २ ॥
दुख सुख पाप पुन्य दिन राती । साधु असाधु सुजाति कुजाती ॥
दानव देव ऊँच अरु नीचू । अमिअ सुजीवनु माहुरु मीचू ॥ ३ ॥
माया ब्रह्म जीव जगदीसा । लच्छि अलच्छि रंक अवनीसा ॥
कासी मग सुरसरि क्रमनासा । मरु मारव महिदेव गवासा ॥ ४ ॥
सरग नरक अनुराग बिरागा । निगमागम गुन दोष बिभागा ॥ ५ ॥

The tales of sins and vices of the wicked, on the one hand, and of the virtues of the virtuous, on the other, are like boundless and unfathomable oceans. That is why I have enumerated only a few virtues and vices; for they cannot be acquired or discarded without being duly distinguished. The good as well as the vile, all have been brought into being by the Creator; it is the Vedas that have differentiated them by reckoning the merits of the former class and the demerits of the other. The Vedas, the Itihāsas (such as the *Rāmāyaṇa* and

* In the Purāṇas we read how both nectar and wine were churned out of the ocean of milk by the joint efforts of the gods and the demons.

the *Mahābhārata*) and the Purāṇas unanimously declare that the creation of Brahmā (the Creator) is an intermixture of good and evil. It is characterized by pairs of opposites such as pain and pleasure, sin and merit, day and night, the good and the wicked, good birth and vile birth, demons and gods, the high and the low, nectar and poison, a happy life and death, Māyā and Brahma, *i. e.*, Matter and Spirit, the soul and God (the Lord of the universe), plenty and poverty, the pauper and the king, the sacred Kāśī or Banaras and Magadh or North Bihar (the accursed land), the holy Gaṅgā—the river of the celestials—and the unholy Karmanāśā* (in Bihar), the desert land of Marwar (Western Rajputana and Sind) and the rich soil of Malwa, the Brahman—who is a veritable god on earth—and the barbarian who feeds on the cow, heaven and hell, attachment and dispassion. The Vedas and other sacred books have sifted good from evil. (1—5)

दो०—जड़ चेतन गुन दोषमय बिस्व कीन्ह करतार ।
संत हंस गुन गहहिं पय परिहरि बारि बिकार ॥ ६ ॥

God has created the universe consisting of animate and inanimate beings as partaking of both good and evil; swans† in the form of saints imbibe the milk of goodness, rejecting water in the form of evil. (6)

चौ०—अस बिबेक जब देइ बिधाता । तब तजि दोष गुनहिं मनु राता ॥
काल सुभाउ करम बरिआईं । भलेउ प्रकृति बस चुकइ भलाईं ॥ १ ॥
सो सुधारि हरिजन जिमि लेहीं । दलि दुख दोष बिमल जसु देहीं ॥
खलउ करहिं भल पाइ सुसंगू । मिटइ न मलिन सुभाउ अभंगू ॥ २ ॥
लखि सुबेष जग बंचक जेऊ । बेष प्रताप पूजिअहिं तेऊ ॥
उघरहिं अंत न होइ निबाहू । कालनेमि जिमि रावन राहू ॥ ३ ॥
किएहुँ कुबेषु साधु सनमानू । जिमि जग जामवंत हनुमानू ॥
हानि कुसंग सुसंगति लाहू । लोकहुँ बेद बिदित सब काहू ॥ ४ ॥
गगन चढ़इ रज पवन प्रसंगा । कीचहिं मिलइ नीच जल संगा ॥
साधु असाधु सदन सुक सारीं । सुमिरहिं राम देहिं गनि गारीं ॥ ५ ॥
धूम कुसंगति कारिख होई । लिखिअ पुरान मंजु मसि सोई ॥
सोइ जल अनल अनिल संघाता । होइ जलद जग जीवन दाता ॥ ६ ॥

When Providence blesses one with such discrimination (as is possessed by the swan), then alone does the mind abandon evil and gets enamoured of goodness. By force of the spirit of the times, old habits and past Karma even the good deviate from goodness under the influence of Māyā. But just as servants of Śrī Hari rectify that error and, eradicating sorrow and weakness, bring untarnished glory to them, even so the wicked occasionally perform a noble deed due to their good association, although their evil nature,

* A river of sinful origin in Bihar, a plunge in whose waters is said to destroy one's religious merits. Hence it is called Karmanāśā (that which neutralizes one's meritorious acts).

† The swan is traditionally believed to feed on pearls and credited with the natural gift of separating milk from water.

which is unchangeable, cannot be obliterated. Even those who are impostors are respected on account of their garb, as the world is taken in by their attractive appearance. But they are eventually exposed, and cannot keep up their false appearance till the end, as was the case with Kālanemi*, Rāvaṇa† and Rāhu‡ The good are honoured notwithstanding their mean appearance, even as Jāmbavān (a general of Sugrīva's army, who was endowed with the form of a bear and possessed miraculous strength) and Hanumān (the monkey-god) won honour in this world. Bad association is harmful, while good company is an asset in itself: this is true in the world as well as in the eyes of the Vedas, and is known to all. Through contact with the wind dust ascends to the sky, while it is assimilated with mud when united with low-lying waters. Parrots and Maināś nurtured in the house of the virtuous and the wicked repeat the name of Rāma and pour a volley of abuses respectively. Smoke coming in contact with an evil (earthy)§ substance turns into soot; the same is used as a material for copying the Purāṇas with when converted into beautiful ink. Again, in conjunction with water, fire and air it is transformed into a cloud and brings life to the world. (1—6)

दो०—ग्रह भेषज जल पवन पट पाइ कुजोग सुजोग ।
होहिं कुबस्तु सुबस्तु जग लखहिं सुलच्छन लोग ॥ ७ (क) ॥
सम प्रकास तम पाख दुहुँ नाम भेद बिधि कीन्ह ।
ससि सोषक पोषक समुझि जग जस अपजस दीन्ह ॥ ७ (ख) ॥
जड़ चेतन जग जीव जत सकल राममय जानि ।
बंदउँ सब के पद कमल सदा जोरि जुग पानि ॥ ७ (ग) ॥
देव दनुज नर नाग खग प्रेत पितर गंधर्ब ।
बंदउँ किंनर रजनिचर कृपा करहु अब सर्ब ॥ ७ (घ) ॥

* Kālanemi was a demon chief, who was a contemporary of Rāvaṇa, the mighty king of Lankā. In the *Lankā-Kāṇḍa* (Book VI. 56-58) of this very work we are told how he assumed the false appearance of an ascetic and tried to deceive Hanumān, the devoted servant of the divine Śrī Rāma, but was ultimately detected and killed by Hanumān.

† We read in the *Araṇyakāṇḍa* (Book III. 27. 4-7) how Rāvaṇa appeared before Sitā in the garb of a mendicant but could not keep up his false appearance for long and had to throw off his mask at last.

‡ In the Purāṇas we are told how at the beginning of creation nectar was churned out of the ocean of milk conjointly by the gods and the demons. When the same was being served to the gods by God Viṣṇu Himself (who had assumed the form of a charming damsel in order to put the demons off the scent), the demon Rāhu disguised himself as a god and took his seat in the celestial row to participate in the feast. He was, however, soon detected by the sun-god and the moon-god, who exposed his real character.

§ There is a pun on the compound word 'Kusangati' in the original. 'Ku' is both a noun and an indeclinable prefixed to nouns. As an indeclinable it means bad or evil, while as a noun it is a synonym for the earth. Here it is used in both the senses and has been translated accordingly.

The planets, medicines, water, air and cloth prove good or bad in the world according to their good or evil associations; only men endowed with a keen insight are able to know this. The proportion of moonlight and darkness is the same in the bright as well as in the dark fortnight; only the two have been named differently by the Creator. Knowing the one as the nourisher and the other as the emaciator of the moon, the world has given it a good name and a bad one. Whatever beings, animate or inanimate, there are in the universe, recognizing them, one and all, as consisting of Śrī Rāma, I ever adore the lotus-feet of all with joined palms. I reverence gods, demons, human beings, Nāgas, birds, spirits, manes (the souls of departed ancestors) and Gandharvas, Kinnaras and Rākṣasas (giants).* Pray be gracious to me all on this occasion. (7 A—D)

चौ०—आकर चारि लाख चौरासी । जाति जीव जल थल नभ बासी ॥
सीय राममय सब जग जानी । करउँ प्रनाम जोरि जुग पानी ॥ १ ॥
जानि कृपाकर किंकर मोहू । सब मिलि करहु छाड़ि छल छोहू ॥
निज बुधि बल भरोस मोहि नाहीं । तातें बिनय करउँ सब पाहीं ॥ २ ॥
करन चहउँ रघुपति गुन गाहा । लघु मति मोरि चरित अवगाहा ॥
सूझ न एकउ अंग उपाऊ । मन मति रंक मनोरथ राऊ ॥ ३ ॥
मति अति नीच ऊँचि रुचि आछी । चहिअ अमिअ जग जुरइ न छाछी ॥
छमिहहिं सज्जन मोरि ढिठाई । सुनिहहिं बालबचन मन लाई ॥ ४ ॥
जौं बालक कह तोतरि बाता । सुनहिं मुदित मन पितु अरु माता ॥
हँसिहहिं कूर कुटिल कुबिचारी । जे पर दूषन भूषनधारी ॥ ५ ॥
निज कबित्त केहि लाग न नीका । सरस होउ अथवा अति फीका ॥
जे पर भनिति सुनत हरषाहीं । ते बर पुरुष बहुत जग नाहीं ॥ ६ ॥
जग बहु नर सर सरि सम भाई । जे निज बाढ़ि बढ़हिं जल पाई ॥
सज्जन सकृत सिंधु सम कोई । देखि पूर बिधु बाढ़इ जोई ॥ ७ ॥

Eight million and four hundred thousand † species of living beings, classified under four broad divisions, inhabit land, water and the air. Recognizing the entire creation as full of Sītā and Rāma, I make obeisance to them with joined palms. Knowing me as your servant, be genuinely gracious to me all of you, O mines of compassion. I have no confidence in my intellectual power, hence I supplicate you all. I would recount the virtues of the Lord of Raghus, ‡ Śrī Rāma; but my wits are poor, whereas the exploits of Śrī Rāma

* Gandharvas, Kinnaras and Rākṣasas are different species of superhuman beings. Of these the Gandharvas are celestial songsters and are specially noted for their handsome appearance; while the Kinnaras are credited with the head of a horse. The Rākṣasas are monstrous in appearance and are said to roam at night and feed on the human flesh. The Nāgas are another class of semi-divine beings, who, though resembling serpents in shape, can take the human form at will.

† The number of species of living beings has been categorically fixed in Hindu scriptures as eighty-four lakhs. The four broad divisions are: (1) Jarāyuja (viviparous, such as men and beasts), (2) Aṇḍaja (oviparous), (3) Swedaja (born of sweat, such as lice, bugs etc.) and (4) Udbhijja (sprouting from the soil, viz. plants).

‡ King Raghu was a forbear of Śrī Rāma. His descendants bore the name of Raghus. Having been the head of the clan after His father, Daśaratha, He is aptly called the Lord of the Raghus.

are unfathomable. For this I find not the least resources; while I am bankrupt of mind and intellect, my ambition is right royal. Even though my intellect is exceedingly mean, my aspiration is pitched too high, while I crave for nectar, I have no means in this world to procure even butter-milk. The virtuous will forgive my presumption and listen to my childish babbling with interest. When a child prattles in lisping accents, the parents hear it with a mind full of delight. Those, however, who are hard-hearted, mischievous and perverse and cherish others' faults as an ornament, will feel amused. Who does not like one's own poetry, be it delightful or exceedingly insipid ? Such good people as delight to hear others' composition are rare in this world. The world abounds in men who resemble lakes and rivers, that get swollen with their own rise when waters are added to them. There is some rare good soul like the ocean, which swells at the sight of the full moon. (1—7)

दो०—भाग छोट अभिलाषु बड़ करउँ एक बिस्वास ।
पैहहिं सुख सुनि सुजन सब खल करिहहिं उपहास ॥ ८ ॥

Humble is my lot and my ambition high, my only hope is that all good men will be gratified to hear what I say, while the evil-minded will laugh. (8)

चौ०—खल परिहास होइ हित मोरा । काक कहहिं कलकंठ कठोरा ॥
हंसहि बक दादुर चातकही । हँसहिं मलिन खल बिमल बतकही ॥ १ ॥
कबित रसिक न राम पद नेहू । तिन्ह कहँ सुखद हास रस एहू ॥
भाषा भनिति भोरि मति मोरी । हँसिबे जोग हँसें नहिं खोरी ॥ २ ॥
प्रभु पद प्रीति न सामुझि नीकी । तिन्हहि कथा सुनि लागिहि फीकी ॥
हरि हर पद रति मति न कुतरकी । तिन्ह कहुँ मधुर कथा रघुबर की ॥ ३ ॥
राम भगति भूषित जियँ जानी । सुनिहहिं सुजन सराहि सुबानी ॥
कबि न होउँ नहिं बचन प्रबीनू । सकल कला सब बिद्या हीनू ॥ ४ ॥
आखर अरथ अलंकृति नाना । छंद प्रबंध अनेक बिधाना ॥
भाव भेद रस भेद अपारा । कबित दोष गुन बिबिध प्रकारा ॥ ५ ॥
कबित बिबेक एक नहिं मोरें । सत्य कहउँ लिखि कागद कोरें ॥ ६ ॥

The laughter of the evil-minded will benefit me, crows call the cuckoo hoarse. Herons ridicule the swan, frogs make fun of the *Chātaka* bird and malicious rogues deride refined speech. To those who have no taste for poetry nor devotion to the feet of Śrī Rāma, this undertaking of mine will serve as a subject for delightful mirth. My composition is couched in the popular dialect and my intellect is feeble; hence it is a fit subject for ridicule, and those who laugh shall not incur any blame. To those who cherish no love for the feet of the Lord and have no sound reason either, this story will sound unattractive to the ears To those, however, who possess devotion to the feet of Gods Viṣṇu and Śiva and whose mind is not perverse, the tale of the Chief of the Raghus will taste as sweet. Knowing it in their heart as adorned with devotion to Śrī Rāma, the virtuous will listen to it with bland words of praise. I am no poet nor an adept in the art of speech and am a cipher in all arts and sciences. There are elegant devices of letters, subtleties of meaning, various figures of speech, metrical compositions of different kinds, infinite

varieties of emotions and sentiments and multifarious flaws and excellences of poetic composition. Of these details of poesy, I possess critical knowledge of none. I vouch for it in writing on a blank sheet. (1—6)

दो०—भनिति मोरि सब गुन रहित बिस्व बिदित गुन एक ।
सो बिचारि सुनिहहिं सुमति जिन्ह कें बिमल बिवेक ॥ ९ ॥

My composition is devoid of all charm; it has only one merit, which is known throughout the world. Recognizing this merit, men of sound reason, who are gifted with unbiased judgment, will surely hear it. (9)

चौ०—एहि महँ रघुपति नाम उदारा । अति पावन पुरान श्रुति सारा ॥
मंगल भवन अमंगल हारी । उमा सहित जेहि जपत पुरारी ॥ १ ॥
भनिति बिचित्र सुकबि कृत जोऊ । राम नाम बिनु सोह न सोऊ ॥
बिधुबदनी सब भाँति सँवारी । सोह न बसन बिना बर नारी ॥ २ ॥
सब गुन रहित कुकबि कृत बानी । राम नाम जस अंकित जानी ॥
सादर कहहिं सुनहिं बुध ताही । मधुकर सरिस संत गुनग्राही ॥ ३ ॥
जदपि कबित रस एकउ नाहीं । राम प्रताप प्रगट एहि माहीं ॥
सोइ भरोस मोरें मन आवा । केहिं न सुसंग बड़प्पनु पावा ॥ ४ ॥
धूमउ तजइ सहज करुआई । अगरु प्रसंग सुगंध बसाई ॥
भनिति भदेस बस्तु भलि बरनी । राम कथा जग मंगल करनी ॥ ५ ॥

It contains the gracious name of the Lord of Raghus, which is exceedingly holy and the very cream of the Purāṇas and the Vedas. It is the abode of blessings and the remover of evils, and is muttered by Lord Śiva, the enemy of the demon Tripura, along with his consort, Umā. Even a composition of marvellous beauty and written by a gifted poet does not commend itself without the name of Śrī Rāma A pretty woman with a charming countenance and fully adorned does not look attractive when undressed. On the other hand, the wise recite and hear with admiration even the composition of a worthless poet, which is devoid of all merit, knowing it as adorned with the name and glory of Śrī Rāma; for, like the bee, saints have a bias for goodness. Although it has no poetic charm whatsoever, the glory of Śrī Rāma is manifest in it. This is the only hope which flashes on my mind; who has not been exalted by noble company? Even smoke rising from burning aloe wood is impregnated with the latter's fragrance and gives up its natural pungency. Although my composition is clumsy, it treats of a commendable theme, viz., the story of Śrī Rāma, which brings felicity to the world. (1—5)

छं०—मंगल करनि कलि मल हरनि तुलसी कथा रघुनाथ की ।
गति कूर कबिता सरित की ज्यों सरित पावन पाथ की ॥
प्रभु सुजस संगति भनिति भलि होइहि सुजन मन भावनी ।
भव अंग भूति मसान की सुमिरत सुहावनि पावनी ॥

The tale of the Lord of Raghus, O Tulasīdāsa, brings forth blessings and wipes away the impurities of the Kali age. The course of this stream of my

poetry is tortuous like that of the holy Gangā. By its association with the auspicious glory of the Lord my composition will be blessed and will captivate the mind of the virtuous. On the person of Lord Śiva, even the ashes of the cremation-ground appear charming and purify by their very thought.

दो०—प्रिय लागिहि अति सबहि मम भनिति राम जस संग ।
दारु बिचारु कि करइ कोउ बंदिअ मलय प्रसंग ॥ १० (क) ॥
स्याम सुरभि पय बिसद अति गुनद करहिं सब पान ।
गिरा ग्राम्य सिय राम जस गावहिं सुनहिं सुजान ॥ १० (ख) ॥

My composition will appear extremely delightful to all by its association with the glory of Śrī Rāma, even as timber of every description is transformed into sandal and becomes worthy of adoration by contact with the Malaya mountain (in south India), and nobody takes into account the quality of wood in that region. The milk of even a dark cow is white and possesses a great medicinal value and is drunk by all. So do the wise chant and hear the glory of Sītā and Rāma even though couched in the vulgar tongue. (10 A-B)

चौ०—मनि मानिक मुकुता छबि जैसी । अहि गिरि गज सिर सोह न तैसी ॥
नृप किरीट तरुनी तनु पाई । लहहिं सकल सोभा अधिकाई ॥ १ ॥
तैसेहिं सुकबि कबित बुध कहहीं । उपजहिं अनत अनत छबि लहहीं ॥
भगति हेतु बिधि भवन बिहाई । सुमिरत सारद आवति धाई ॥ २ ॥
राम चरित सर बिनु अन्हवाएँ । सो श्रम जाइ न कोटि उपाएँ ॥
कबि कोबिद अस हृदयँ बिचारी । गावहिं हरि जस कलि मल हारी ॥ ३ ॥
कीन्हें प्राकृत जन गुन गाना । सिर धुनि गिरा लगत पछिताना ॥
हृदय सिंधु मति सीप समाना । स्वाति सारदा कहहिं सुजाना ॥ ४ ॥
जौं बरषइ बर बारि बिचारू । होहिं कबित मुकुतामनि चारू ॥ ५ ॥

The beauty of a gem, a ruby and a pearl does not catch the eye as it should so long as they are borne on the head of a serpent, the top of a mountain and the crown of an elephant respectively. The charm of them all is enhanced when they adorn the diadem of a king or the person of a young lady. Even so, the wise say, the outpourings of a good poet originate at one place (in the poet's own mind) and exercise their charm elsewhere (on the mind of the admirer). Attracted by his devotion, Saraswatī (the goddess of poetry) comes with all speed from the abode of Brahmā (the topmost heaven) at his very invocation. The fatigue occasioned by this long journey cannot be relieved by millions of devices unless she takes a dip in the lake of Śrī Rāma's exploits. Realizing this in their heart, poets and wise men chant the glory of Śrī Hari alone, which wipes away the impurities of the Kali age. Finding the bard singing the glories of worldly men the goddess of speech begins to beat her breast and repent. The wise liken the heart of a poet to the sea, his intellect to the shell containing pearls and goddess Saraswatī to the star called Swāti (the modern Arcturus, the fifteenth lunar asterism considered as favourable to the formation of pearls). If there is a shower in the form of beautiful ideas, lovely pearls make their appearance in the form of poetic effusions. (1—5)

दो०—जुगुति बेधि पुनि पोहिअहिं राम चरित बर ताग ।
पहिरहिं सज्जन बिमल उर सोभा अति अनुराग ॥ ११ ॥

If those pearls are pierced with skill and strung together on the beautiful thread of Śrī Rāma's exploits, and if noble souls wear them in their innocent heart, grace in the form of excessive fondness is the result. (11)

चौ०—जे जनमे कलि काल कराला । करतब बायस बेष मराला ॥
चलत कुपंथ बेद मग छाँडे । कपट कलेवर कलि मल भाँडे ॥ १ ॥
बंचक भगत कहाइ राम के । किंकर कंचन कोह काम के ॥
तिन्ह महँ प्रथम रेख जग मोरी । धींग धरमध्वज धंधक धोरी ॥ २ ॥
जौं अपने अवगुन सब कहऊँ । बाढ़इ कथा पार नहिं लहऊँ ॥
ताते मैं अति अलप बखाने । थोरे महुँ जानिहहिं सयाने ॥ ३ ॥
समुझि बिबिधि बिधि बिनती मोरी । कोउ न कथा सुनि देइहि खोरी ॥
एतेहु पर करिहहिं जे असंका । मोहि ते अधिक ते जड़ मति रंका ॥ ४ ॥
कबि न होउँ नहिं चतुर कहावउँ । मति अनुरूप राम गुन गावउँ ॥
कहँ रघुपति के चरित अपारा । कहँ मति मोरि निरत संसारा ॥ ५ ॥
जेहिं मारुत गिरि मेरु उड़ाहीं । कहहु तूल केहि लेखे माहीं ॥
समुझत अमित राम प्रभुताई । करत कथा मन अति कदराई ॥ ६ ॥

Those who are born in this terrible age of Kali, who though akin to the crow in their doings have put on the garb of a swan, who tread the evil path, abandoning the track of the Vedas, who are embodiments of falsehood and repositories of sins of the Kali age, who are impostors claiming to be devotees of Śrī Rāma, though slaves of mammon, anger and passion, and who are unscrupulous, hypocritical and foremost among intriguers,—I occupy the first place among them. Were I to recount all my vices, their tale will assume large dimensions, and yet I shall not be able to exhaust them. Hence I have mentioned very few. A word should suffice for the wise. Entering into the spirit of my manifold prayers, none should blame me on hearing this story. Those who will raise objections even then are more stupid and deficient in intellect than myself. I am no poet and have no pretensions to ingenuity; I sing the glories of Śrī Rāma according to my own lights. My intellect, which wallows in the world, is a poor match for the unlimited exploits of the Lord of Raghus. Tell me, of what account is cotton in the face of the strong wind before which even mountains like Meru are blown away? Realizing the infinite glory of Śrī Rāma, my mind feels very diffident in proceeding with this story. (1—6)

दो०—सारद सेस महेस बिधि आगम निगम पुरान ।
नेति नेति कहि जासु गुन करहिं निरंतर गान ॥ १२ ॥

Goddess Saraswatī, Śeṣa (the thousand-headed serpent-god), the great Lord Śiva, Brahmā (the Creator), the Āgamas (Tantras), the Vedas and the Purāṇas unceasingly sing His virtues, saying 'not that', 'not that'.* (12)

* This shows that the gods and scriptures mentioned above, though ever engaged in singing the virtues of Śrī Rāma, are able only to touch the fringe of His glory and find themselves unable to describe it in full. That is why they make only a negative assertion 'Na iti' (not that), meaning

चौ०—सब जानत प्रभु प्रभुता सोई । तदपि कहें बिनु रहा न कोई ॥
तहाँ बेद अस कारन राखा । भजन प्रभाउ भाँति बहु भाषा ॥ १ ॥
एक अनीह अरूप अनामा । अज सच्चिदानंद पर धामा ॥
व्यापक बिस्वरूप भगवाना । तेहिं धरि देह चरित कृत नाना ॥ २ ॥
सो केवल भगतन हित लागी । परम कृपाल प्रनत अनुरागी ॥
जेहि जन पर ममता अति छोहू । जेहिं करुना करि कीन्ह न कोहू ॥ ३ ॥
गई बहोर गरीब नेवाजू । सरल सबल साहिब रघुराजू ॥
बुध बरनहिं हरि जस अस जानी । करहिं पुनीत सुफल निज बानी ॥ ४ ॥
तेहिं बल मैं रघुपति गुन गाथा । कहिहउँ नाइ राम पद माथा ॥
मुनिन्ह प्रथम हरि कीरति गाई । तेहिं मग चलत सुगम मोहि भाई ॥ ५ ॥

Though all know the Lord's greatness as such, yet none has refrained from describing it. The Vedas have justified it thus: they have variously sung the glory of remembering the Lord. God, who is one, desireless, formless, nameless and unborn, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss, who is supreme effulgence, all-pervading and all-formed,—it is He who has performed many deeds assuming a suitable form. That He has done only for the good of His devotees; for He is supremely gracious and loving to the suppliant. He is excessively fond of His devotees and treats them as His own; He has never frowned at him to whom He has once shown His favour. The restorer of what has been lost, the befriender of the poor, the Lord of Raghus is a straightforward and powerful master. Knowing thus, the wise sing the glory of Śrī Hari and thereby hallow and bring supreme reward to their speech It is on this strength (the supreme efficacy of remembering the Lord and the potency of His grace) that I shall sing the virtues of the Lord of Raghus, bowing my head to the feet of Śrī Rāma. Sages have sung the glory of Śrī Hari in the past, it will be easy for me to follow that very path. (1—5)

दो०—अति अपार जे सरित बर जौं नृप सेतु कराहिं ।
चढ़ि पिपीलिकउ परम लघु बिनु श्रम पारहि जाहिं ॥ १३ ॥

If kings get bridges constructed over big rivers, which are too broad, even the tiniest ants cross them without exertion. (13)

चौ०—एहि प्रकार बल मनहि देखाई । करिहउँ रघुपति कथा सुहाई ॥
ब्यास आदि कबि पुंगव नाना । जिन्ह सादर हरि सुजस बखाना ॥ १ ॥
चरन कमल बंदउँ तिन्ह केरे । पुरवहुँ सकल मनोरथ मेरे ॥
कलि के कबिन्ह करउँ परनामा । जिन्ह बरने रघुपति गुन ग्रामा ॥ २ ॥
जे प्राकृत कबि परम सयाने । भाषाँ जिन्ह हरि चरित बखाने ॥
भए जे अहहिं जे होइहहिं आगें । प्रनवउँ सबहि कपट सब त्यागें ॥ ३ ॥
होहु प्रसन्न देहु बरदानू । साधु समाज भनिति सनमानू ॥
जो प्रबंध बुध नहिं आदरहीं । सो श्रम बादि बाल कबि करहीं ॥ ४ ॥

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thereby that whatever is predicated of God falls much too short of His real glory and is at best only a faint indication of it.

कीरति भनिति भूति भलि सोई। सुरसरि सम सब कहँ हित होई॥
राम सुकीरति भनिति भदेसा। असमंजस अस मोहि अँदेसा॥ ५॥
तुम्हरी कृपाँ सुलभ सोउ मोरे। सिअनि सुहावनि टाट पटोरे॥ ६॥

Reassuring the mind in this way, I shall narrate the charming story of the Lord of Raghus. Vyāsa and various other top-ranking poets, who have reverently recounted the blessed glory of Śrī Hari, I bow to the lotus feet of them all; let them fulfil all my desires. I make obeisance to the bards of the Kali age, who have sung the multitudinous virtues of the Lord of Raghus. Even those poets of supreme wisdom who belong to the Prākṛta or popular class (as opposed to the Sanskrit or the cultured class), who have narrated the exploits of Śrī Hari in the spoken language, including those who have flourished in the past, those who are still living and those who are yet to come, I reverence them, one and all, renouncing all false appearance. Be propitious and grant this boon that my song may be honoured in the assemblage of pious souls. A composition which the wise refuse to honour is fruitless labour which only silly poets undertake. Of glory, poetry and affluence that alone is blessed which, like the celestial river (Gangā), is conducive to the good of all. The glory of Śrī Rāma is charming indeed, while my speech is rough. This is something incongruous, I am afraid. By your grace, even this incongruity will turn out well for me, embroidery of silk looks charming even on coarse cloth (1—6)

दो०—सरल कवित कीरति बिमल सोइ आदरहिं सुजान।
सहज बयर बिसराइ रिपु जो सुनि करहिं बखान॥ १४ (क)॥
सो न होइ बिनु बिमल मति मोहि मति बल अति थोर।
करहु कृपा हरि जस कहउँ पुनि पुनि करउँ निहोर॥ १४ (ख)॥
कबि कोबिद रघुबर चरित मानस मंजु मराल।
बालबिनय सुनि सुरुचि लखि मो पर होहु कृपाल॥ १४ (ग)॥

The wise admire only that poetry which is lucid and portrays a spotless character and which even opponents hear with applause forgetting natural animosity. Such poetry is not possible without a refined intellect, and of intellectual power I have very little. Be gracious, therefore, so that I may depict the glory of Śrī Hari: I solicit again and again. Poets and wise men, lovely swans sporting in the Mansarovar lake of Śrī Rāma's exploits! hearing my childlike prayer and recognizing my refined taste, be kindly disposed towards me. (14 A-C)

सो०—बंदउँ मुनि पद कंजु रामायन जेहिं निरमयउ।
सखर सुकोमल मंजु दोष रहित दूषन सहित॥ १४ (घ)॥
बंदउँ चारिउ बेद भव बारिधि बोहित सरिस।
जिन्हहि न सपनेहुँ खेद बरनत रघुबर बिसद जसु॥ १४ (ङ)॥

बंदउँ बिधि पद रेनु भव सागर जेहिं कीन्ह जहँ ।
संत सुधा ससि धेनु प्रगटे खल बिष बारुनी ॥ १४ (च) ॥
दो०—बिबुध बिप्र बुध ग्रह चरन बंदि कहउँ कर जोरि ।
होइ प्रसन्न पुरवहु सकल मंजु मनोरथ मोरि ॥ १४ (छ) ॥

I bow to the lotus feet of the sage (Vālmīki) who composed the Rāmāyaṇa, which, though containing an account of the demon Khara (a cousin of Rāvaṇa), is yet very soft and charming, and though faultless, is yet full of references to Dūṣaṇa (another cousin of the demon-king Rāvaṇa)*. I reverence all the four Vedas, barks as it were on the ocean of mundane existence, which never dream of weariness in singing the untarnished glory of Śrī Rāma, the Chief of Raghus. I greet the dust on the feet of Brahmā (the Creator), who has evolved the ocean of worldly existence, the birth-place of nectar, the moon and the cow of plenty in the form of saints, on the one hand, and of poison and wine in the form of the wicked, on the other.† Making obeisance to the feet of gods, the Brahmans, wise men and the deities presiding over the nine planets, I pray to them with joined palms! Be pleased to accomplish all my fair desires. (14 D–G)

चौ०—पुनि बंदउँ सारद सुरसरिता । जुगल पुनीत मनोहर चरिता ॥
मज्जन पान पाप हर एका । कहत सुनत एक हर अबिबेका ॥ १ ॥
गुर पितु मातु महेस भवानी । प्रनवउँ दीनबंधु दिन दानी ॥
सेवक स्वामि सखा सिय पी के । हित निरुपधि सब बिधि तुलसी के ॥ २ ॥
कलि बिलोकि जग हित हर गिरिजा । साबर मंत्र जाल जिन्ह सिरिजा ॥
अनमिल आखर अरथ न जापू । प्रगट प्रभाउ महेस प्रतापू ॥ ३ ॥
सो उमेस मोहि पर अनुकूला । करिहिं कथा मुद मंगल मूला ॥
सुमिरि सिवा सिव पाइ पसाऊ । बरनउँ राम चरित चित चाऊ ॥ ४ ॥
भनिति मोरि सिव कृपाँ बिभाती । ससि समाज मिलि मनहुँ सुराती ॥
जे एहि कथहि सनेह समेता । कहिहहिं सुनिहहिं समुझि सचेता ॥ ५ ॥
होइहहिं राम चरन अनुरागी । कलि मल रहित सुमंगल भागी ॥ ६ ॥

* There is a pun on the words 'Sakhara' and 'Dūṣaṇasahita' in the original, which are capable of a twofold interpretation. 'Khara' and 'Dūṣaṇa' as proper nouns denote two of Rāvaṇa's cousins, who figure in the *Araṇyakāṇḍa* of the great epic poem of Vālmīki and lead a military expedition against Śrī Rāma in order to avenge themselves of the insult offered to their sister, Śūrpaṇakhā, by Lakṣmaṇa, Śrī Rāma's younger brother. They are eventually killed by Śrī Rāma, who proves too strong for the redoubtable demon chiefs. 'Khara' also means sharp-edged or hard and is thus contrasted with 'Sukomala' (soft). Similarly, 'Dūṣaṇa' also means a fault and thus the poet exposes himself to a contradiction in terms when he calls the *Rāmāyaṇa* both 'Doṣarahita' (faultless) and 'Duṣaṇasahita' (full of faults). The contradiction, however, is only verbal in both cases and constitutes a figure of speech known by the name 'Virodha' or 'Virodhābhāsa'.

† This has an indirect reference to the churning of the ocean of milk as described in the Purāṇas, by the joint labours of gods and demons at the beginning of creation, which yielded beneficent objects like nectar, the moon and the cow of plenty, on the one hand, and pernicious substances like poison and wine on the other.

Again, I bow to goddess Saraswatī and the celestial river Gangā, both of whom are holy and perform agreeable roles. The one (Gangā) wipes away sin through immersion and draught; the other (Saraswatī) dispels ignorance through the recital and hearing of her glory. I adore the great Lord Śiva and His consort, Goddess Bhavānī (Pārvatī), my preceptors and parents, friends of the forlorn and ever given to charity, servants, masters and friends of Sītā's lord, and true benefactors of Tulasīdāsa in every way. Seeing the prevalence of the Kali age Hara and Girijā (Śiva and Pārvatī) evolved a string of spells in the tongue of savages, incoherent syllables which yield no interpretation and require no repetition, but whose efficacy is patent, revealing Śiva's glory That Lord of Umā (Pārvatī), favourable as He is to me, shall make this story of mine a source of blessings and joy. Thus invoking Lord Śiva and His Consort, Śivā (Pārvatī), and obtaining Their favour, I relate the exploits of Śrī Rāma with a heart full of ardour. By Śiva's grace my composition will shed its lustre even as a night shines in conjunction with the moon and the stars. Those who will fondly and intelligently recite or hear this story with attention will develop devotion to the feet of Śrī Rāma and, purged of the impurities of Kali, will obtain choice blessings. (1—6)

दो०—सपनेहुँ साचेहुँ मोहि पर जौं हर गौरि पसाउ ।
तौ फुर होउ जो कहेउँ सब भाषा भनिति प्रभाउ ॥ १५ ॥

If Hara and Gaurī (Lord Śiva and Pārvatī) are really propitious to me, even in dream, let all that I have said in glorification of this poetry of mine, written in a popular dialect, come out true. (15)

चौ०—बंदउँ अवध पुरी अति पावनि । सरजू सरि कलि कलुष नसावनि ॥
प्रनवउँ पुर नर नारि बहोरी । ममता जिन्ह पर प्रभुहि न थोरी ॥ १ ॥
सिय निंदक अघ ओघ नसाए । लोक बिसोक बनाइ बसाए ॥
बंदउँ कौसल्या दिसि प्राची । कीरति जासु सकल जग माची ॥ २ ॥
प्रगटेउ जहँ रघुपति ससि चारू । बिस्व सुखद खल कमल तुसारू ॥
दसरथ राउ सहित सब रानी । सुकृत सुमंगल मूरति मानी ॥ ३ ॥
करउँ प्रनाम करम मन बानी । करहु कृपा सुत सेवक जानी ॥
जिन्हहि बिरचि बड़ भयउ बिधाता । महिमा अवधि राम पितु माता ॥ ४ ॥

I reverence the exceedingly holy city of Ayodhyā (Śrī Rāma's birth-place) and the river Sarayū (flowing beside it), which wipes out the sins of the Kali age. Again, I bow to the men and women of the city, who enjoy the affection of the Lord in no small degree. Even though they were damned as a result of the heap of sins incurred by the calumniators of Sītā (who were instrumental in bringing about Her lifelong exile), they were lodged in a heavenly abode, having been divested of sorrow. I greet Kausalyā (the eldest queen of King Daśaratha) whose glory stands diffused throughout the world. She is the eastern horizon whence arose the lovely moon in the shape of the Lord of Raghus, who affords delight to the entire universe and is blighting as frost to lotuses in the form of the wicked. Recognizing King Daśaratha together with all his consorts as incarnations of merit and fair blessings, I make obeisance to them in thought, word and deed Knowing me as a servant

of your son, be gracious to me. The father and mothers of Śrī Rāma are the very perfection of glory, by creating whom even Brahmā (the Creator) has exalted himself

(1-4)

सो०—बंदउँ अवध भुआल सत्य प्रेम जेहि राम पद ।
बिछुरत दीनदयाल प्रिय तनु तृन इव परिहरेउ ॥ १६ ॥

I adore the King of Ayodhyā, who cherished such true love for the feet of Śrī Rāma that he gave up his dear life as a mere straw the moment the Lord, who is compassionate to the poor, parted from him. (16)

चौ०—प्रनवउँ परिजन सहित बिदेहू । जाहि राम पद गूढ़ सनेहू ॥
जोग भोग महँ राखेउ गोई । राम बिलोकत प्रगटेउ सोई ॥ १ ॥
प्रनवउँ प्रथम भरत के चरना । जासु नेम ब्रत जाइ न बरना ॥
राम चरन पंकज मन जासू । लुबुध मधुप इव तजइ न पासू ॥ २ ॥
बंदउँ लछिमन पद जलजाता । सीतल सुभग भगत सुख दाता ॥
रघुपति कीरति बिमल पताका । दंड समान भयउ जस जाका ॥ ३ ॥
सेष सहस्रसीस जग कारन । जो अवतरेउ भूमि भय टारन ॥
सदा सो सानुकूल रह मो पर । कृपासिंधु सौमित्रि गुनाकर ॥ ४ ॥
रिपुसूदन पद कमल नमामी । सूर सुसील भरत अनुगामी ॥
महाबीर बिनवउँ हनुमाना । राम जासु जस आप बखाना ॥ ५ ॥

I make obeisance to King Janaka, along with his family, who bore hidden affection for the feet of Śrī Rāma. Even though he had veiled it under the cloak of asceticism and luxury, it broke out the moment he saw Śrī Rāma. Of Śrī Rāma's brothers, I bow, first of all, to the feet of Bharata, whose self-discipline and religious austerity beggar description and whose mind thirsts for the lotus feet of Śrī Rāma like a bee and never leaves their side. I reverence the lotus feet of Lakṣmaṇa,—cool and charming and a source of delight to the devotee,—whose renown served as a staff for the spotless flag of Śrī Rāma's glory. He is no other than the thousand-headed serpent-god, Śeṣa, the cause (support) of the universe, who came down to dispel the fear of the earth. May that son of Sumitrā, an ocean of benevolence and a mine of virtues, be ever propitious to me. I adore the lotus feet of Śatrughna (*lit.*, the slayer of his foes), who is valiant yet amiable in disposition, and a constant companion of Bharata. I supplicate Hanumān, the great hero, whose glory has been extolled by Śrī Rāma Himself.

(1—5)

सो०—प्रनवउँ पवनकुमार खल बन पावक ग्यानघन ।
जासु हृदय आगार बसहिं राम सर चाप धर ॥ १७ ॥

I greet Hanumān, the son of the Wind-god, an embodiment of wisdom, who is fire as it were for the forest of the wicked, and in the abode of whose heart resides Śrī Rāma, equipped with a bow and arrows. (17)

चौ०—कपिपति रीछ निसाचर राजा। अंगदादि जे कीस समाजा॥
बंदउँ सब के चरन सुहाए। अधम सरीर राम जिन्ह पाए॥ १॥
रघुपति चरन उपासक जेते। खग मृग सुर नर असुर समेते॥
बंदउँ पद सरोज सब केरे। जे बिनु काम राम के चेरे॥ २॥
सुक सनकादि भगत मुनि नारद। जे मुनिबर बिग्यान बिसारद॥
प्रनवउँ सबहि धरनि धरि सीसा। करहु कृपा जन जानि मुनीसा॥ ३॥
जनकसुता जग जननि जानकी। अतिसय प्रिय करुनानिधान की॥
ताके जुग पद कमल मनावउँ। जासु कृपाँ निरमल मति पावउँ॥ ४॥
पुनि मन बचन कर्म रघुनायक। चरन कमल बंदउँ सब लायक॥
राजिवनयन धरें धनु सायक। भगत बिपति भंजन सुख दायक॥ ५॥

The lord of monkeys (Sugrīva), the chief of bears (Jāmbavān), the king of demons (Vibhīṣaṇa) and the host of monkeys beginning with Angada, I reverence the charming feet of all, who attained Śrī Rāma even though born in the lowest species. As many worshippers there are of the feet of Raghupati (the Lord of Raghus), including birds, beasts, gods, human beings and demons, I adore the lotus feet of them all, who are disinterested servants of Śrī Rāma. Śuka, Sanaka and others (viz., Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra), sage Nārada and all other eminent sages who are devotees of God and proficient in the spiritual lore, I make obeisance to all, placing my head on the ground, be gracious to me, O lords of ascetics, knowing me as your servant. Jānakī, daughter of Janaka and mother of the universe and the most beloved consort of Śrī Rāma, the Fountain of Mercy, I seek to propitiate the pair of Her lotus feet, so that by Her grace I may be blessed with a refined intellect. Again, I adore, in thought, word and deed, the lotus feet of the all-worthy Lord of Raghus, who has lotus-like eyes and wields a bow and arrows, and who relieves the distress of His devotees and affords delight to them. (1–5)

दो०—गिरा अरथ जल बीचि सम कहिअत भिन्न न भिन्न।
बंदउँ सीता राम पद जिन्हहि परम प्रिय खिन्न॥ १८॥

I reverence the feet of Sītā and Rāma, who though stated to be different are yet identical just like a word and its meaning or like water and the waves on its surface, and to whom the afflicted are most dear. (18)

चौ०—बंदउँ नाम राम रघुबर को। हेतु कृसानु भानु हिमकर को॥
बिधि हरि हरमय बेद प्रान सो। अगुन अनूपम गुन निधान सो॥ १॥
महामंत्र जोइ जपत महेसू। कासीं मुकुति हेतु उपदेसू॥
महिमा जासु जान गनराऊ। प्रथम पूजिअत नाम प्रभाऊ॥ २॥
जान आदिकबि नाम प्रतापू। भयउ सुद्ध करि उलटा जापू॥
सहस नाम सम सुनि सिव बानी। जपि जेईं पिय संग भवानी॥ ३॥
हरषे हेतु हेरि हर ही को। किय भूषन तिय भूषन ती को॥
नाम प्रभाउ जान सिव नीको। कालकूट फलु दीन्ह अमी को॥ ४॥

I greet the name 'Rāma' of the chief of Raghus[1], which is composed of seed-letters[2] representing the fire-god, the sun-god and the moon-god (viz., *Ra*, *Ā* and *Ma* respectively). It is the same as Brahmā (the creative aspect of God), Viṣṇu (His preservative aspect) and Śiva (His disintegrating aspect), and the vital breath of the Vedas; It is unqualified, peerless and a mine of virtues. It is the great spell which Lord Maheśwara mutters and which, when imparted by Him at Kāśī (the modern Banaras), leads to emancipation[3]. Its glory is known to Lord Gaṇeśa, who is worshipped before all others as a concession to the Name [4]. The oldest poet (Vālmīki) is acquainted with the glory of the Name, inasmuch as he attained to purity by repeating It in the reverse order[5] Hearing the verdict of Lord Śiva that the name is as good as a thousand other names of God, Goddess Bhavānī (Pārvatī) dined with Her consort after uttering It only once[6]. Noticing such partiality of Her heart for the Name, Hara (Lord Śiva) made that lady, who was the ornament of Her sex, the ornament of His own person (*i e.*, made Her a part of His own being by assigning to Her the left half of His body). Śiva knows full well the power of the Name, due to which deadly poison served the purpose of nectar to Him. (1—4)

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1. This distinguishes the Name from the two other names bearing the same sound but denoting two other personalities, viz., Paraśurāma and Balarāma (the elder brother of Śrī Kṛṣṇa).

2. Each letter-sound of the Sanskrit Alphabet represents one or more gods of the Hindu pantheon and the Tantras claim that these letters (which are technically known by the name of Bīja-Mantras or seed-letters), if joined with other spells sacred to that particular deity and repeated with due ceremony a fixed number of times possess the efficacy of revealing the deity in person before the worshipper and propitiating him or her.

3. The scriptures maintain that Lord Śiva, the deity presiding over the holy city of Kāśī, whispers into the right ear of every creature, dying within its boundaries, the name 'Rāma' and thereby brings emancipation to the dying soul.

4. We read in the Purāṇas how there was a scramble for precedence among the gods, each of whom claimed the first position for himself. They approached Brahmā for a ruling. He told them that they should race round the world and that whoever finished the round quickest of all would be accounted the highest. Gaṇeśa, who rode on no better animal than a rat, naturally lagged behind. He met on the way the celestial sage Nārada, who advised him to scratch the word 'Rāma' on the ground and pace round It, as the word comprised in Itself the entire creation. Gaṇeśa did accordingly and was naturally the first to finish the round of the universe. Brahmā appreciated this act of Gaṇeśa and conceded his title to precedence over all the other gods. Since then Gaṇeśa has uninterruptedly enjoyed the right of being worshipped first of all.

5. Vālmīki was a highway robber in his earlier life and was known by the name of Ratnākara. Seven seers, who once fell a victim to his depredation, awakened him to the reprehensible nature of his conduct and instructed him in the holy name of Rāma. Completely immersed in sin he was, however, unable to utter the word. The seers, therefore, asked him to repeat the name in the reverse order. In this way he was eventually able to utter the name correctly and in course of time became so fond of repeating It that he ultimately turned out to be a pious sage and seer and related the story of Śrī Rāma in fine verse even before His advent.

6. We are told in the *Padmapurāṇa* how Bhagavān Śankara once invited His consort to join Him in His dinner. Goddess Pārvatī, however, declined on the ground that She had not yet recited the *Viṣṇu-sahasranāma*, which She must before Her breakfast. Bhagavān Śankara asked Her to repeat the name of Rāma instead, as a single utterance of the Name was as good as reciting a thousand other names of the Lord. Pārvatī did accordingly and forthwith joined Her lord in dinner.

दो०—बरषा रितु रघुपति भगति तुलसी सालि सुदास ।
राम नाम बर बरन जुग सावन भादव मास ॥ १९ ॥

Devotion to the Lord of Raghus is, as it were, the rainy season and the noble devotees, says Tulasīdāsa, represent the paddy crop; while the two charming syllables of the name 'Rāma' stand for the two months of Śrāvaṇa and Bhādrapada (corresponding roughly to July and August). (19)

चौ०—आखर मधुर मनोहर दोऊ । बरन बिलोचन जन जिय जोऊ ॥
सुमिरत सुलभ सुखद सब काहू । लोक लाहु परलोक निबाहू ॥ १ ॥
कहत सुनत सुमिरत सुठि नीके । राम लखन सम प्रिय तुलसी के ॥
बरनत बरन प्रीति बिलगाती । ब्रह्म जीव सम सहज सँघाती ॥ २ ॥
नर नारायन सरिस सुभ्राता । जग पालक बिसेषि जन त्राता ॥
भगति सुतिय कल करन बिभूषन । जग हित हेतु बिमल बिधु पूषन ॥ ३ ॥
स्वाद तोष सम सुगति सुधा के । कमठ सेष सम धर बसुधा के ॥
जन मन मंजु कंज मधुकर से । जीह जसोमति हरि हलधर से ॥ ४ ॥

Both the letter-sounds are sweet and attractive; they are the two eyes, as it were, of the Alphabet and the very life of the devotee. Easy to remember and delightful to one and all, they bring gain here and provide sustenance hereafter. They are most delightful to utter, hear and remember and are dear as Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to Tulasīdāsa. When treated separately, the two letters lose their harmony (*i. e.*, are differently pronounced, bear diverse meanings in the form of seed-letters and as such yield different results); whereas they are naturally allied even as Brahma (the Cosmic Spirit) and Jīva (the individual soul). Good brothers like the divine sages Nara and Nārāyaṇa, they are sustainers of the universe and redeemers of the devotee in particular. They are beautiful ornaments for the ears of the fair damsel in the form of Bhakti (Devotion) and stand as the spotless sun and moon for the good of the world. They are like the taste and the gratifying quality of nectar in the form emancipation, and are supporters of the globe like the divine Tortoise* and the serpent-god Śeṣa. Again, they are like bees for the beautiful lotus in the shape of the devotee's mind and are the very like of Hari (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) and Haladhara (Balarāma, who wielded a plough as a weapon) for Yaśodā (Their foster-mother, the wife of Nanda) in the shape of the tongue.

(1—4)

दो०—एकु छत्रु एकु मुकुटमनि सब बरननि पर जोउ ।
तुलसी रघुबर नाम के बरन बिराजत दोउ ॥ २० ॥

Lo! the two letters (र and म) forming part of the name of Raghuvara (the Chief of the Raghus) crown all the letters of the Alphabet, the one spread-

* We are told in the *Bhāgavata* and other Purāṇas how God Viṣṇu assumed the form of a gigantic tortoise in order to support Mount Mandara and prevent it from sinking while it was being rotated by gods and demons in their attempt to churn the ocean of milk and obtain nectar out of it.

ing like an umbrella and the other resting as a crest-jewel, O Tulasīdāsa. * (20)

चौ०—समुझत सरिस नाम अरु नामी। प्रीति परसपर प्रभु अनुगामी ॥
नाम रूप दुइ ईस उपाधी। अकथ अनादि सुसामुझि साधी ॥ १ ॥
को बड छोट कहत अपराधू। सुनि गुन भेदु समुझिहहिं साधू ॥
देखिअहिं रूप नाम आधीना। रूप ग्यान नहिं नाम बिहीना ॥ २ ॥
रूप बिसेष नाम बिनु जानें। करतल गत न परहिं पहिचानें ॥
सुमिरिअ नाम रूप बिनु देखें। आवत हृदयँ सनेह बिसेषें ॥ ३ ॥
नाम रूप गति अकथ कहानी। समुझत सुखद न परति बखानी ॥
अगुन सगुन बिच नाम सुसाखी। उभय प्रबोधक चतुर दुभाषी ॥ ४ ॥

The name and the object named, though similar in significance, are allied as master and servant one to the other. (That is to say, even though there is complete identity between God and His name, the former closely follows the latter even as a servant follows his master. The Lord appears in person at the very mention of His Name). Name and form are the two attributes of God; both of them are ineffable and beginningless and can be rightly understood only by means of good intelligence. It is presumptuous on one's part to declare as to which is superior or inferior. Hearing the distinctive merits of both, pious souls will judge for themselves. Forms are found to be subordinate to the name; without the name you cannot come to the knowledge of a form. Typical forms cannot be identified, even if they be in your hand, without knowing their name. And if the name is remembered even without seeing the form, the latter flashes on the mind with a special liking for it. The mystery of name and form is a tale which cannot be told; though delightful to comprehend, it cannot be described in words. Between the unqualified Absolute and qualified Divinity, the Name is a good intermediary, it is a clever interpreter revealing the truth of both. (1—4)

दो०—राम नाम मनिदीप धरु जीह देहरीं द्वार ।
तुलसी भीतर बाहेरहुँ जौं चाहसि उजिआर ॥ २१ ॥

Instal the luminous gem in the shape of the divine name 'Rāma' on the threshold of the tongue at the doorway of your mouth, if you will have light both inside and outside, O Tulasīdāsa. (21)

चौ०—नाम जीहँ जपि जागहिं जोगी। बिरति बिरंचि प्रपंच बियोगी ॥
ब्रह्मसुखहि अनुभवहिं अनूपा। अकथ अनामय नाम न रूपा ॥ १ ॥

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* The letter 'र्' of the Sanskrit alphabet, when immediately preceding another consonant or the vowel 'ऋ', is placed above that letter in the shape of a curved line (e. g., in र्क and र्ऋ); while the nasal consonant 'म्' when preceded by any other letter, is changed into a dot (technically known by the name of 'Anuswāra) when placed on the top of that letter (e. g., in हं). The curved line standing for the letter 'र्' has been poetically compared in the above Dohā to an umbrella and the dot substituted for 'म्' likened to a crest-jewel, both of which enjoy an exalted position and are emblems of the royal state. In this way they are recognized as superior to all other letters of the Alphabet.

जाना चहहिं गूढ़ गति जेऊ । नाम जीहँ जपि जानहिं तेऊ ॥
साधक नाम जपहिं लय लाएँ । होहिं सिद्ध अनिमादिक पाएँ ॥ २ ॥
जपहिं नामु जन आरत भारी । मिटहिं कुसंकट होहिं सुखारी ॥
राम भगत जग चारि प्रकारा । सुकृती चारिउ अनघ उदारा ॥ ३ ॥
चहू चतुर कहुँ नाम अधारा । ग्यानी प्रभुहि बिसेषि पिआरा ॥
चहुँ जुग चहुँ श्रुति नाम प्रभाऊ । कलि बिसेषि नहिं आन उपाऊ ॥ ४ ॥

Yogīs (mystics) who are full of dispassion and are wholly detached from God's creation keep awake (in the daylight of wisdom) muttering the Name with their tongue, and enjoy the felicity of Brahma (the Absolute), which is incomparable, unspeakable, unmixed with sorrow and devoid of name and form. Even those (seekers of Truth) who aspire to know the mysterious ways of Providence are able to comprehend them by muttering the Name. Strivers (hankering after worldly achievements) repeat the Name, absorbed in contemplation, and become accomplished, acquiring superhuman powers such as that of becoming infinitely small in size.* If devotees in distress mutter the Name, their worst calamities of the gravest type disappear and they become happy In this world there are four kinds of devotees† of Śrī Rāma, all the four of them are virtuous, sinless and noble. All the four, clever as they are, rely upon the Name. Of these the enlightened devotee is specially dear to the Lord. The glory of the Name is supreme in all the four Yugas and all the four Vedas, particularly in the Kali age, in which there is no other means of salvation.

(1—4)

दो०—सकल कामना हीन जे राम भगति रस लीन ।
नाम सुप्रेम पियूष ह्रद तिन्हहुँ किए मन मीन ॥ २२ ॥

Even those who are free from all desires and absorbed in the joy of devotion to Śrī Rāma have thrown their heart as fish into the nectarine lake of supreme affection for the Name. (22)

चौ०—अगुन सगुन दुइ ब्रह्म सरूपा । अकथ अगाध अनादि अनूपा ॥
मोरें मत बड़ नामु दुहू तें । किए जेहिं जुग निज बस निज बूतें ॥ १ ॥

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* Works on Yoga enumerate the following eight kinds of miraculous powers acquired by Yogis:—

(i) *Aṇimā* (the faculty of reducing one's body to the size of an atom), (ii) *Mahimā* (the power of expanding one's body to an infinitely large size), (iii) *Garimā* (the power of becoming infinitely heavy), (iv) *Laghimā* (the power of becoming infinitely light in body), (v) *Prāpti* (unrestricted access to all places), (vi) *Prākāmya* (realizing whatever one desires), (vii) *Īśitva* (absolute lordship) and (viii) *Vaśitva* (subjugating all).

† Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā mentions four kinds of devotees, viz., (i) Ārta (the afflicted), (ii) Jijñāsu (the seeker of Truth), (iii) Arthārthī (the seeker of worldly riches) and (iv) Jñānī (the enlightened), and speaks of them all as virtuous and benevolent. Of course, the enlightened devotee, it is pointed out, is the most beloved of the Lord and constitutes His very self (*vide* VII. 16—18).

प्रौढ़ि सुजन जनि जानहिं जन की । कहउँ प्रतीति प्रीति रुचि मन की ॥
एकु दारुगत देखिअ एकू । पावक सम जुग ब्रह्म बिबेकू ॥ २ ॥
उभय अगम जुग सुगम नाम तें । कहेउँ नामु बड़ ब्रह्म राम तें ॥
ब्यापकु एकु ब्रह्म अबिनासी । सत चेतन घन आनँद रासी ॥ ३ ॥
अस प्रभु हृदयँ अछत अबिकारी । सकल जीव जग दीन दुखारी ॥
नाम निरूपन नाम जतन तें । सोउ प्रगटत जिमि मोल रतन तें ॥ ४ ॥

There are two aspects of God—the one unqualified and the other qualified. Both these aspects are unspeakable, unfathomable, without beginning and without parallel. To my mind, greater than both is the Name, that has established Its rule over both by Its might. Friends should not take this as a bold assertion on the part of this servant, I record my mind's own conviction, partiality and liking. The two aspects of Brahma (God) should be recognized as akin to fire: the one (viz., the Absolute) represents fire which is latent in wood; while the other (qualified Divinity) corresponds to that which is externally visible. Though both are inaccessible by themselves, they are easily attainable through the Name, therefore I have called the Name greater than Brahma and Śrī Rāma both. Brahma (God) is one, all-pervading and imperishable; He is all truth, consciousness and a compact mass of joy. Even though such immutable Lord is present in every heart, all beings in this world are nonetheless miserable and unhappy. Through the practice of the Name preceded by Its true appraisement, however, the same Brahma reveals Itself even as the value of a jewel is revealed by its correct knowledge.

(1—4)

दो०—निरगुन तें एहि भाँति बड़ नाम प्रभाउ अपार ।
कहउँ नामु बड़ राम तें निज बिचार अनुसार ॥ २३ ॥

The glory of the Name is thus infinitely greater than that of the Absolute, I shall show below how in my judgment the Name is superior even to Śrī Rāma (23)

चौ०—राम भगत हित नर तनु धारी । सहि संकट किए साधु सुखारी ॥
नामु सप्रेम जपत अनयासा । भगत होहिं मुद मंगल बासा ॥ १ ॥
राम एक तापस तिय तारी । नाम कोटि खल कुमति सुधारी ॥
रिषि हित राम सुकेतुसुता की । सहित सेन सुत कीन्हि बिबाकी ॥ २ ॥
सहित दोष दुख दास दुरासा । दलइ नामु जिमि रबि निसि नासा ॥
भंजेउ राम आपु भव चापू । भव भय भंजन नाम प्रतापू ॥ ३ ॥
दंडक बनु प्रभु कीन्ह सुहावन । जन मन अमित नाम किए पावन ॥
निसिचर निकर दले रघुनंदन । नामु सकल कलि कलुष निकंदन ॥ ४ ॥

For the sake of His devotees Śrī Rāma assumed the form of a human being and, suffering calamities Himself, brought relief to the pious. By fondly repeating His Name, on the other hand, devotees easily become abodes of joy and blessings. Śrī Rāma Himself redeemed a single woman (Ahalyā),* the wife of an ascetic; while His Name corrected the error of crores of wicked souls. For the sake of the sage (Viśwāmitra) Śrī Rāma wrought the destruction of

* See Bālakāṇḍa (209. 6 to 211).

Suketu's daughter* (Tāḍakā) with her army and son (Subāhu); while His Name puts an end to the devotee's vain hopes along with his errors and sorrows even as the sun terminates night. In His own person Śrī Rāma broke the bow of Śiva†, while the very glory of His Name dispels the fear of rebirth.‡ The Lord restored the charm of the Daṇḍaka forest§ alone, while His Name purified the mind of countless devotees The Delighter of Raghus (Śrī Rāma) crushed only a host of demons, while His Name uproots all the impurities of the Kali age. (1—4)

दो०—सवरी गीध सुसेवकनि सुगति दीन्हि रघुनाथ ।
नाम उधारे अमित खल बेद बिदित गुन गाथ ॥ २४ ॥

The Lord of Raghus conferred immortality only on faithful servants like Śabarī (the celebrated Bhil woman) and the vulture (Jaṭāyu)×, while His Name has delivered innumerable wretches; the tale of Its virtues is well-known in the Vedas. (24)

चौ०—राम सुकंठ बिभीषन दोऊ । राखे सरन जान सबु कोऊ ॥
नाम गरीब अनेक नेवाजे । लोक बेद बर बिरिद बिराजे ॥ १ ॥
राम भालु कपि कटकु बटोरा । सेतु हेतु श्रमु कीन्ह न थोरा ॥
नामु लेत भवसिंधु सुखाहीं । करहु बिचारु सुजन मन माहीं ॥ २ ॥
राम सकुल रन रावनु मारा । सीय सहित निज पुर पगु धारा ॥
राजा रामु अवध रजधानी । गावत गुन सुर मुनि बर बानी ॥ ३ ॥
सेवक सुमिरत नामु सप्रीती । बिनु श्रम प्रबल मोह दलु जीती ॥
फिरत सनेहँ मगन सुख अपनें । नाम प्रसाद सोच नहिं सपनें ॥ ४ ॥

As is well-known to all, Śrī Rāma extended His protection to two devotees only, viz., Sugrīva and Vibhīṣaṇa; His Name, on the other hand, has showered Its grace on numerous humble souls. This superb glory of the Name shines forth in the world as well as in the Vedas. Śrī Rāma collected an army of bears and monkeys and took no little pains over the construction of a bridge (to connect the mainland with the island of Laṅkā). Through the repetition of His Name, however, the ocean of mundane existence itself gets dried up: let the wise bear this in mind. Śrī Rāma killed in battle Rāvaṇa with all his family and returned to His own city with Sītā. He was then crowned king in the capital of Ayodhyā,

* Ibid., 208. 3 and 209. 3.

† Ibid., 260. 4

‡ Here there is a pun on the word 'Bhava', which has been used as a synonym of Lord Śiva in the first instance and again in the sense of rebirth. The comparison has been drawn between Śrī Rāma Himself, on the one hand, and the glory of His Name (not the Name Itself), on the other. The latter, it is pointed out, excels the former in that while Śrī Rāma broke a concrete object like the bow, the glory of His Name dispels an abstract thing like the fear of rebirth.

§ The forest of Daṇḍaka had been rendered unfit for life in any form whatsoever under a curse from the sage Śukrāchārya. The divine presence of Śrī Rāma, however, removed the curse and restored the forest to its original charm.

× For the accounts of Śabarī and Jaṭāyu see *Araṇyakāṇḍa* 33. 3 to 36 and 28. 4 to 32 respectively.

while gods and sages sung His glories in choicest phrases. His servants are, however, able to conquer the formidable army of error by fondly remembering His Name and, absorbed in devotion, move about in joy which is peculiarly their own; by the grace of the Name they know not sorrow even in dream. (1—4)

दो०—ब्रह्म राम तें नामु बड़ बर दायक बर दानि ।
रामचरित सत कोटि महँ लिय महेस जियँ जानि ॥ २५ ॥

The Name is thus greater than Brahma and Śrī Rāma both and confers blessings even on the bestowers of boons. Knowing this in His heart, the great Lord Śiva chose this word (Rāma) for Himself out of Śrī Rāma's story comprising 100 crore verses.* (25)

[PAUSE 1 FOR A THIRTY-DAY RECITATION]

चौ०—नाम प्रसाद संभु अबिनासी । साजु अमंगल मंगल रासी ॥
सुक सनकादि सिद्ध मुनि जोगी । नाम प्रसाद ब्रह्मसुख भोगी ॥ १ ॥
नारद जानेउ नाम प्रतापू । जग प्रिय हरि हरि हर प्रिय आपू ॥
नामु जपत प्रभु कीन्ह प्रसादू । भगत सिरोमनि भे प्रहलादू ॥ २ ॥
ध्रुवँ सगलानि जपेउ हरि नाऊँ । पायउ अचल अनूपम ठाऊँ ॥
सुमिरि पवनसुत पावन नामू । अपने बस करि राखे रामू ॥ ३ ॥
अपतु अजामिलु गजु गनिकाऊ । भए मुकुत हरि नाम प्रभाऊ ॥
कहौं कहाँ लगि नाम बड़ाई । रामु न सकहिं नाम गुन गाई ॥ ४ ॥

By the grace of the Name alone Lord Śambhu (Śiva) is immortal and, though endowed with inauspicious paraphernalia (such as a wreath of skulls), is yet a storehouse of blessings. Again, it is by the grace of the Name alone that Siddhas (adepts), sages and Yogīs like Śuka, Sanaka and others enjoy divine raptures. Nārada realized the glory of the Name; that is why, while Śrī Hari is beloved of the world (and Hara is dear to Śrī Hari), he (Nārada) is dear to Hari and Hara (Viṣṇu and Śiva) both. It was because of his repeating the Name that the Lord showered His grace on Prahlāda, who thereby became the crest-jewel of devotees. Dhruva repeated the name of Śrī Hari with a feeling of indignation (at the harsh treatment received from his stepmother) and thereby attained a fixed and incomparable station in the heavens. It is by remembering the holy Name that Hanumān (son of the Wind-god) holds Śrī Rāma under His thumb. The vile Ajāmila and even the celebrated elephant and the harlot of the legend were liberated by the power of Śrī Hari's name. I have no words to depict the glory of the Name: not even Rāma can adequately glorify It. (1—4)

दो०—नामु राम को कलपतरु कलि कल्यान निवासु ।
जो सुमिरत भयो भाँग तें तुलसी तुलसीदासु ॥ २६ ॥

The name of Rāma is a wish-yielding tree, the very home of beatitude in this age of Kali, by remembering which Tulasīdāsa (the poet himself) was transformed from an intoxicating drug like the hemp-plant into the holy basil. (26)

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* The *Rāmāyaṇa* as originally composed by Brahmā himself and delivered to Lord Śiva through Nārada is believed to have contained as many as a 100 crore verses.

चौ०—चहुँ जुग तीनि काल तिहुँ लोका । भए नाम जपि जीव बिसोका ॥
बेद पुरान संत मत एहू । सकल सुकृत फल राम सनेहू ॥ १ ॥
ध्यानु प्रथम जुग मखबिधि दूजें । द्वापर परितोषत प्रभु पूजें ॥
कलि केवल मल मूल मलीना । पाप पयोनिधि जन मन मीना ॥ २ ॥
नाम कामतरु काल कराला । सुमिरत समन सकल जग जाला ॥
राम नाम कलि अभिमत दाता । हित परलोक लोक पितु माता ॥ ३ ॥
नहिं कलि करम न भगति बिबेकू । राम नाम अवलंबन एकू ॥
कालनेमि कलि कपट निधानू । नाम सुमति समरथ हनुमानू ॥ ४ ॥

(Not only in this Kali age, but) in all the four ages*, at all times (past, present and future) and in all the three spheres (viz., heaven, earth and the subterranean region) creatures have been rid of grief by repeating the Name. The verdict of the Vedas and the Purāṇas as well as of saints is just this: that love of Rāma (or the name 'Rāma') is the reward of all virtuous acts. In the first age, contemplation; in the second age, sacrifice; in the Dwāpara age the Lord is propitiated through worship. This age of Kali, however, is simply corrupt and the root of all impurities, where the mind of man wallows like a fish in the ocean of sin. In this terrible age the Name alone is the wish-yielding tree, the very thought of which puts an end to all the illusions of the world. The Name of Rāma is the bestower of one's desired object in this age of Kali, It is beneficent in the other world and one's father and mother in this world. In Kaliyuga neither Karma (action) nor Bhakti (devotion) nor again Jñāna (knowledge) avails; the Name of Rāma is the only resort. The age of Kali is as it were the demon Kālanemi, the repository of all wiles; whereas the Name is the wise and mighty Hanumān.† (1—4)

दो०—राम नाम नरकेसरी कनककसिपु कलिकाल ।
जापक जन प्रहलाद जिमि पालिहि दलि सुरसाल ॥ २७ ॥

(To use another metaphor) the Name of Rāma is, as it were, the Lord manifested as a man-lion and the age of Kali, the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu. Crushing this enemy of gods, the Name will protect the devotees repeating It, even as the Man-lion protected Prahlāda. (27)

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* The span of life of the universe, which is known by the name of Kalpa and consists of 4,32,00,00,000 human years, has been divided into 1,000 epochs or Chaturyugas. Each Chaturyuga is made up of four Yugas or ages, viz., Satyayuga, Tretā, Dwāpara and Kaliyuga. Their duration is given below:

Satyayuga······17,28,000 years
Tretā······12,96,000 ,,
Dwāpara······ 8,64,000 ,,
Kaliyuga······ 4,32,000 ,,

Thus it will be seen that the duration of Dwāpara is twice that of Kaliyuga, that of Tretā thrice that of Kaliyuga and that of Satyayuga four times that of Kaliyuga. In this way the duration of a Chaturyuga is ten times that of Kaliyuga.

† The story of Kālanemi and his death at the hands of Hanumān has been briefly told in the foot-note under 6 3 in this very Kāṇḍa.

चौ०—भाय कुभाय अनख आलसहूँ । नाम जपत मंगल दिसि दसहूँ ॥
सुमिरि सो नाम राम गुन गाथा । करउँ नाइ रघुनाथहि माथा ॥ १ ॥
मोरि सुधारिहि सो सब भाँती । जासु कृपा नहिं कृपाँ अघाती ॥
राम सुस्वामि कुसेवकु मोसो । निज दिसि देखि दयानिधि पोसो ॥ २ ॥
लोकहुँ बेद सुसाहिब रीती । बिनय सुनत पहिचानत प्रीती ॥
गनी गरीब ग्रामनर नागर । पंडित मूढ मलीन उजागर ॥ ३ ॥
सुकबि कुकबि निज मति अनुहारी । नृपहि सराहत सब नर नारी ॥
साधु सुजान सुसील नृपाला । ईस अंस भव परम कृपाला ॥ ४ ॥
सुनि सनमानहिं सबहि सुबानी । भनिति भगति नति गति पहिचानी ॥
यह प्राकृत महिपाल सुभाऊ । जान सिरोमनि कोसलराऊ ॥ ५ ॥
रीझत राम सनेह निसोतें । को जग मंद मलिनमति मोतें ॥ ६ ॥

The Name repeated either with good or evil intentions, in an angry mood or even while yawning, diffuses joy in all the ten directions. Remembering that Name and bowing my head to the Lord of Raghus, I proceed to recount the virtues of Śrī Rāma. He whose grace is never tired of showing its goodwill to others will mend my errors in every way. Rāma a noble lord, and a poor servant like myself! Yet, true to His own disposition, that storehouse of compassion has fostered me. In the world as well as in the Vedas we observe the following characteristic in a good master, viz., that he comes to recognize one's devotion to him as soon as he hears one's prayer. Rich or poor, rustic or urban, learned or unlettered, of good repute or bad, a good poet or a bad one, all men and women extol the king according to his or her light. And the pious, sensible, amiable and supremely compassionate ruler, who takes his descent from a ray of God, greets all with sweet words, hearing their compliments and appraising their composition, devotion, supplication and conduct. Such is the way of earthly monarchs, to say nothing of the Lord of Kosala (Śrī Rāma), who is the crest-jewel of wise men. Śrī Rāma gets pleased with unalloyed love; but who is duller and more impure of mind in this world than I? (1—6)

दो०—सठ सेवक की प्रीति रुचि रखिहहिं राम कृपालु ।
उपल किए जलजान जेहिं सचिव सुमति कपि भालु ॥ २८ (क) ॥
हौंहु कहावत सबु कहत राम सहत उपहास ।
साहिब सीतानाथ सो सेवक तुलसीदास ॥ २८ (ख) ॥

The benevolent Rāma will nonetheless respect the devotion and pleasure of this wicked servant,—Śrī Rāma, who made barks out of rocks and wise counsellors out of monkeys and bears. Everybody calls me a servant of the Lord and I myself claim to be one; and Śrī Rāma puts up with the scoffing remark that a master like Sītā's lord has a servant like Tulasīdāsa. (28 A—B)

चौ०—अति बड़ि मोरि ढिठाई खोरी । सुनि अघ नरकहुँ नाक सकोरी ॥
समुझि सहम मोहि अपडर अपनें । सो सुधि राम कीन्हि नहिं सपनें ॥ १ ॥
सुनि अवलोकि सुचित चख चाही । भगति मोरि मति स्वामि सराही ॥
कहत नसाइ होइ हियँ नीकी । रीझत राम जानि जन जी की ॥ २ ॥

रहति न प्रभु चित चूक किए की । करत सुरति सय बार हिए की ॥
जेहिं अघ बधेउ ब्याध जिमि बाली । फिरि सुकंठ सोइ कीन्हि कुचाली ॥ ३ ॥
सोइ करतूति बिभीषन केरी । सपनेहुँ सो न राम हियँ हेरी ॥
ते भरतहि भेंटत सनमाने । राजसभाँ रघुबीर बखाने ॥ ४ ॥

My presumption and error are indeed very great and, hearing the tale of my sins, even hell has turned up its nose at them. I shudder to think of it due to my assumed fears, while Śrī Rāma took no notice of them even in a dream. The Lord, on the other hand, applauded my devotion and spirit on hearing of, perceiving and scanning them with the mind's eye. If there is anything good in one's heart, it is marred by the telling; for Śrī Rāma is pleased to note what is there in the devotee's mind. The Lord never cherishes in His mind the lapse, if any, on the part of a devotee; while He remembers the latter's spirit a hundred times. For instance, the very crime for which He had killed Vālī (the monkey-king of Kiṣkindhā) even as a huntsman was repeated in the misdemeanour perpetrated by Sugrīva.* Vibhīṣaṇa too was guilty of the same offence, but Śrī Rāma took no cognizance of it even in a dream. The Hero of Raghu's clan, on the other hand, honoured them both at His meeting with Bharata (on His return from Lankā) and commended them in open court. (1—4)

दो०—प्रभु तरु तर कपि डार पर ते किए आपु समान ।
तुलसी कहूँ न राम से साहिब सीलनिधान ॥ २९ (क) ॥
राम निकाईं रावरी है सबही को नीक ।
जौं यह साँची है सदा तौ नीको तुलसीक ॥ २९ (ख) ॥
एहि बिधि निज गुन दोष कहि सबहि बहुरि सिरु नाइ ।
बरनउँ रघुबर बिसद जसु सुनि कलि कलुष नसाइ ॥ २९ (ग) ॥

While the Lord sat at the foot of trees, the monkeys perched themselves high on the boughs: such insolent creatures He exalted to His own position! There is no lord so generous as Śrī Rāma, O Tulasīdāsa ! Your goodness, O Rāma, is beneficent to all; if this is a fact, Tulasīdāsa too will be blessed by the same. Thus revealing my merits and demerits and bowing my head once more to all, I proceed to sing the immaculate glory of the Chief of Raghus, by hearing which the impurities of the Kali age are wiped away. (29 A—C)

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* Vālī was killed by Śrī Rāma on the plea that the former had usurped his younger brother's wife. Sugrīva and Vibhīṣaṇa too are stated to have taken Tārā (Vālī's wife) and Mandodarī (Rāvaṇa's wife) respectively as their consort after the death of their husbands. In this way even though Sugrīva and Vibhīṣaṇa too were practically guilty of the same offence which brought the Lord's wrath on Vālī, their guilt was extenuated by the fact that they took those ladies as wife after their brother's death and with the consent of the other party, and by the further fact that their conduct was in keeping with the practice in vogue among the monkey and demon chiefs. That is why, while the poet characterizes Vālī's conduct as a crime (Agha), he dismisses Sugrīva's act as a mere misdemeanour (कुचाली).

चौ०—जागबलिक जो कथा सुहाई। भरद्वाज मुनिबरहि सुनाई॥
कहिहउँ सोइ संबाद बखानी। सुनहुँ सकल सज्जन सुखु मानी॥ १॥
संभु कीन्ह यह चरित सुहावा। बहुरि कृपा करि उमहि सुनावा॥
सोइ सिव कागभुसुंडिहि दीन्हा। राम भगत अधिकारी चीन्हा॥ २॥
तेहि सन जागबलिक पुनि पावा। तिन्ह पुनि भरद्वाज प्रति गावा॥
ते श्रोता बकता समसीला। सवँदरसी जानहिं हरिलीला॥ ३॥
जानहिं तीनि काल निज ग्याना। करतल गत आमलक समाना॥
औरउ जे हरिभगत सुजाना। कहहिं सुनहिं समुझहिं बिधि नाना॥ ४॥

The charming story which Yājñavalkya related to the good sage Bharadwāja, I shall repeat the same dialogue at length; let all good souls hear it with a feeling of delight. This ravishing tale was conceived by Śambhu (Lord Śiva), who graciously communicated it to His Consort Umā (Pārvatī). Śiva imparted it once more to Kākabhuśuṇḍi (a sage in the form of a crow), knowing him to be a devotee of Śrī Rāma and one qualified to hear it. And it was Yājñavalkya who received it from the latter (Kākabhuśuṇḍi) and narrated it to Bharadwāja. Both these, the listener (Bharadwāja) and the reciter (Yājñavalkya), are equally virtuous, they view all alike and are acquainted with the pastimes of Śrī Hari. Like a myrobalan fruit placed on one's palm, they hold the past, present and future within their knowledge. Besides these, other enlightened devotees of Śrī Hari too recite, hear and understand this story in diverse ways. (1—4)

दो०—मैं पुनि निज गुर सन सुनी कथा सो सूकरखेत।
समुझी नहिं तसि बालपन तब अति रहेउँ अचेत॥ ३० (क)॥
श्रोता बकता ग्याननिधि कथा राम कै गूढ़।
किमि समुझौं मैं जीव जड़ कलि मल ग्रसित बिमूढ़॥ ३० (ख)॥

Then I heard the same story in the holy Śūkarakṣetra* (the modern Soron in the western United Provinces) from my preceptor; but as I had no sense in those days of my childhood, I could not follow it full well. Both the listener and the reciter of the mysterious story of Śrī Rāma must be repositories of wisdom. How, then, could I, a dull and stupid creature steeped in the impurities of the Kali age, expect to follow it? (30 A—B)

चौ०—तदपि कही गुर बारहिं बारा। समुझि परी कछु मति अनुसारा॥
भाषाबद्ध करबि मैं सोई। मोरें मन प्रबोध जेहिं होई॥ १॥
जस कछु बुधि बिबेक बल मेरें। तस कहिहउँ हियँ हरि के प्रेरें॥
निज संदेह मोह भ्रम हरनी। करउँ कथा भव सरिता तरनी॥ २॥
बुध बिश्राम सकल जन रंजनि। रामकथा कलि कलुष बिभंजनि॥
रामकथा कलि पंनग भरनी। पुनि बिबेक पावक कहुँ अरनी॥ ३॥

* The name is associated with the descent of Śrī Hari as a Boar (Śūkara) who killed Hiraṇyākṣa, the elder brother of Hiraṇyakaśipu, and lifted up the earth from the depths of the ocean, to which it had been consigned by the said demon.

राम कथा कलि कामद गाई । सुजन सजीवनि मूरि सुहाई ॥
सोइ बसुधातल सुधा तरंगिनि । भय भंजनि भ्रम भेक भुअंगिनि ॥ ४ ॥
असुर सेन सम नरक निकंदिनि । साधु बिबुध कुल हित गिरिनंदिनि ॥
संत समाज पयोधि रमा सी । बिस्व भार भर अचल छमा सी ॥ ५ ॥
जम गन मुहँ मसि जग जमुना सी । जीवन मुकुति हेतु जनु कासी ॥
रामहि प्रिय पावनि तुलसी सी । तुलसिदास हित हियँ हुलसी सी ॥ ६ ॥
सिव प्रिय मेकल सैल सुता सी । सकल सिद्धि सुख संपति रासी ॥
सदगुन सुर गन अंब अदिति सी । रघुबर भगति प्रेम परमिति सी ॥ ७ ॥

Nevertheless, when the preceptor repeated the story time after time, I followed it to a certain extent according to my poor lights. I shall versify the same in the popular tongue, so that my mind may derive satisfaction from it. Equipped with what little intellectual and critical power I possess I shall write with a heart inspired by Śrī Hari. The story I am going to tell is such as will dispel my own doubts, errors and delusion and will serve as a boat for crossing the stream of mundane existence. The story of Rāma is a solace to the learned and a source of delight to all men and wipes out the impurities of the Kali age. Śrī Rāma's story is a pea-hen for the serpent in the form of the Kali age; again, it is a wooden stick * for kindling the sacred fire of wisdom. The tale of Rāma is the cow of plenty in this age of Kali; it is a beautiful life-giving herb for the virtuous. It is a veritable river of nectar on the surface of this globe, it shatters the fear of birth and death and is a virtual snake for the frog of delusion. It is beneficent to pious souls even as Goddess Pārvatī (the daughter of Himavān) is friendly to gods; again, it puts an end to hell even as Pārvatī exterminated the army of demons. It flows from the assemblage of saints, even as Lakṣmī (the goddess of wealth) sprang from the ocean, and like the immovable earth it bears the burden of the entire creation. Like the sacred river Yamunā in this world it scares away the messengers of Yama (the god of death). It is holy Kāśī as it were for the liberation of souls. It is dear to Rāma as the sacred basil plant and is truly beneficent to Tulasīdāsa as his own mother, Hulasī. It is beloved of Lord Śiva as the river Narmadā (which has its source in Mount Mekala, a peak of the Amarkantak hills), it is a mine of all attainments as well as of happiness and prosperity. It is to noble qualities what mother Aditi is to gods, it is the culmination as it were of devotion to and love for Śrī Rāma. (1—7)

दो०—राम कथा मंदाकिनी चित्रकूट चित चारु ।
तुलसी सुभग सनेह बन सिय रघुबीर बिहारु ॥ ३१ ॥

The story of Śrī Rāma is the river Mandākinī (which washes the foot of Chitrakūṭa); a guileless heart is Mount Chitrakūṭa (one of the happy resorts of Śrī Rāma during his wanderings in the forest); while pure love, says Tulasīdāsa, is the woodland in which Sītā and Rāma carry on Their divine pastimes. (31)

* The fire used in sacrifices in India is produced by revolving a wooden stick against a wooden block.

चौ०—राम चरित चिंतामनि चारू । संत सुमति तिय सुभग सिंगारू ॥
जग मंगल गुन ग्राम राम के । दानि मुकुति धन धरम धाम के ॥ १ ॥
सद्गुर ग्यान बिराग जोग के । बिबुध बैद भव भीम रोग के ॥
जननि जनक सिय राम प्रेम के । बीज सकल ब्रत धरम नेम के ॥ २ ॥
समन पाप संताप सोक के । प्रिय पालक परलोक लोक के ॥
सचिव सुभट भूपति बिचार के । कुंभज लोभ उदधि अपार के ॥ ३ ॥
काम कोह कलि मल करि गन के । केहरि सावक जन मन बन के ॥
अतिथि पूज्य प्रियतम पुरारि के । कामद घन दारिद दवारि के ॥ ४ ॥
मंत्र महामनि बिषय ब्याल के । मेटत कठिन कुअंक भाल के ॥
हरन मोह तम दिनकर कर से । सेवक सालि पाल जलधर से ॥ ५ ॥
अभिमत दानि देवतरु बर से । सेवत सुलभ सुखद हरि हर से ॥
सुकबि सरद नभ मन उडगन से । राम भगत जन जीवन धन से ॥ ६ ॥
सकल सुकृत फल भूरि भोग से । जग हित निरुपधि साधु लोग से ॥
सेवक मन मानस मराल से । पावन गंग तरंग माल से ॥ ७ ॥

The narrative of Rāma is a lovely wish-yielding gem, and a graceful adornment for saintly wisdom. The hosts of virtues possessed by Śrī Rāma are a blessing to the world and the bestowers of liberation, riches, religious merit and the divine abode. They are true teachers of wisdom, dispassion and Yoga (contemplative union with God), and celestial physicians (Aświnīkumāras) for the fell disease of metempsychosis; parents of devotion to Sītā and Rāma and the seed of all holy vows, practices and observances; antidotes for sins, agonies and griefs and beloved guardians in this as well as in the next world; valiant ministers to King Reason, and a veritable Agastya* drinking up the illimitable ocean of greed; young lions residing in the forest of the devotee's mind to kill the herd of elephants in the shape of lust, anger and impurities of the Kali age; dear to Lord Śiva (the Slayer of the demon Tripura) as a highly respectable and most beloved guest, and wish-yielding clouds quenching the wild fire of indigence. They are spells and valuable gems as it were for counteracting the venom of serpents in the form of sensuous enjoyments, and efface the deep marks of evil destiny contained on the forehead. They are sunbeams, as it were, dispelling the darkness of ignorance, and clouds nourishing the paddy crop in the form of devotees; trees of paradise, as it were, yielding the object of one's desire; easily available for service and gratifying like Viṣṇu and Śiva; stars as it were adorning the autumnal sky in the shape of the poet's mind, and the very life's treasure for the devotees of Śrī Rāma; a rich harvest of enjoyments as it were yielded by the totality of one's meritorious deeds and sincerely devoted to the good of the world like holy men; sporting in the mind of the devotees as swans in the Mansarovar lake and purifying as the waves of the holy Gangā.

(1—7)

* Sage Agastya is said to have drunk up the ocean in three draughts. He was born of a jar; this earned him the title of 'Kumbhaja'.

दो०—कुपथ कुतरक कुचालि कलि कपट दंभ पाषंड ।
दहन राम गुन ग्राम जिमि इंधन अनल प्रचंड ॥ ३२ (क) ॥
राम चरित राकेस कर सरिस सुखद सब काहु ।
सज्जन कुमुद चकोर चित हित बिसेषि बड़ लाहु ॥ ३२ (ख) ॥

The hosts of virtues possessed by Śrī Rāma are like a blazing fire to consume the dry wood of evil ways, fallacious reasoning, mischievous practices, deceit, hypocrisy and heresy prevailing in Kali. The exploits of Śrī Rāma are delightful to one and all even as the rays of the full moon; they are particularly agreeable and highly beneficial to the mind of the virtuous, who can be compared to the white water-lily and the *Chakora** bird. (32 A—B)

चौ०—कीन्हि प्रस्न जेहि भाँति भवानी । जेहि बिधि संकर कहा बखानी ॥
सो सब हेतु कहब मैं गाई । कथा प्रबंध बिचित्र बनाई ॥ १ ॥
जेहिं यह कथा सुनी नहिं होई । जनि आचरजु करै सुनि सोई ॥
कथा अलौकिक सुनहिं जे ग्यानी । नहिं आचरजु करहिं अस जानी ॥ २ ॥
राम कथा कै मिति जग नाहीं । असि प्रतीति तिन्ह के मन माहीं ॥
नाना भाँति राम अवतारा । रामायन सत कोटि अपारा ॥ ३ ॥
कलप भेद हरि चरित सुहाए । भाँति अनेक मुनीसन्ह गाए ॥
करिअ न संसय अस उर आनी । सुनिअ कथा सादर रति मानी ॥ ४ ॥

I shall now relate at some length the seed of the story,—viz., how Goddess Bhavānī (Pārvatī) questioned Lord Śankara and how the latter answered Her questions,—weaving a strange narrative round this episode. Let no one who should happen not to have heard this anecdote before be surprised to hear it. Wise men who hear this uncommon legend marvel not; for they know there is no limit to the stories of Śrī Rāma in this world. They are convinced in their heart that Śrī Rāma has bodied Himself forth in diverse ways and that the *Rāmāyaṇa*, though consisting of a thousand million verses, is yet infinite. Great sages have diversely sung the charming stories of Śrī Hari, relating as they do to different Kalpas or cycles. Bearing this in mind, the reader should not entertain any doubt and should hear this narrative reverently and with devotion. (1—4)

दो०—राम अनंत अनंत गुन अमित कथा बिस्तार ।
सुनि आचरजु न मानिहहिं जिन्ह कें बिमल बिचार ॥ ३३ ॥

Rāma is infinite, infinite are His virtues and the dimensions of His story are also immeasurable. Those whose thoughts are pure will, therefore, feel no surprise when they hear it. (33)

चौ०—एहि बिधि सब संसय करि दूरी । सिर धरि गुर पद पंकज धूरी ॥
पुनि सबही बिनवउँ कर जोरी । करत कथा जेहिं लाग न खोरी ॥ १ ॥

* The white water-lily is proverbially noted for its attachment to the moon and is supposed to open its petals in moonlight alone. Similarly the *Chakora* is said to feed on moonbeams and supposed to be particularly enamoured of the moon.

सादर सिवहि नाइ अब माथा । बरनउँ बिसद राम गुन गाथा ॥
संबत सोरह सै एकतीसा । करउँ कथा हरि पद धरि सीसा ॥ २ ॥
नौमी भौम बार मधु मासा । अवधपुरी यह चरित प्रकासा ॥
जेहि दिन राम जनम श्रुति गावहिं । तीरथ सकल तहाँ चलि आवहिं ॥ ३ ॥
असुर नाग खग नर मुनि देवा । आइ करहिं रघुनायक सेवा ॥
जन्म महोत्सव रचहिं सुजाना । करहिं राम कल कीरति गाना ॥ ४ ॥

Putting away all doubts in this way and placing on my head the dust from the lotus feet of my preceptor, I supplicate all with joined palms once more, so that no blame may attach to the telling of the story. Reverently bowing my head to Lord Śiva, I now proceed to recount the fair virtues of Śrī Rāma. Placing my head on the feet of Śrī Hari I commence this story in the Saṃvat year 1631 (1574 A. D.). On Tuesday, the ninth of the lunar month of Chaitra, this story shed its lustre at Ayodhyā. On this day of Śrī Rāma's birth the presiding spirits of all holy places flock there—so declare the Vedas—and demons, Nāgas, birds, human beings, sages and gods come and pay their homage to the Lord of Raghus. Wise men celebrate the great birthday festival and sing the sweet glory of Śrī Rāma. (1—4)

दो०—मज्जहिं सज्जन बृंद बहु पावन सरजू नीर ।
जपहिं राम धरि ध्यान उर सुंदर स्याम सरीर ॥ ३४ ॥

Numerous groups of pious men take dip in the holy waters of the Sarayū river and, visualizing in their heart the beautiful swarthy form of Śrī Rāma, mutter His name. (34)

चौ०—दरस परस मज्जन अरु पाना । हरइ पाप कह बेद पुराना ॥
नदी पुनीत अमित महिमा अति । कहि न सकइ सारदा बिमलमति ॥ १ ॥
राम धामदा पुरी सुहावनि । लोक समस्त बिदित अति पावनि ॥
चारि खानि जग जीव अपारा । अवध तजें तनु नहिं संसारा ॥ २ ॥
सब बिधि पुरी मनोहर जानी । सकल सिद्धिप्रद मंगल खानी ॥
बिमल कथा कर कीन्ह अरंभा । सुनत नसाहिं काम मद दंभा ॥ ३ ॥
रामचरितमानस एहि नामा । सुनत श्रवन पाइअ बिश्रामा ॥
मन करि बिषय अनल बन जरई । होइ सुखी जौं एहिं सर परई ॥ ४ ॥
रामचरित मानस मुनि भावन । बिरचेउ संभु सुहावन पावन ॥
त्रिबिध दोष दुख दारिद दावन । कलि कुचालि कुलि कलुष नसावन ॥ ५ ॥
रचि महेस निज मानस राखा । पाइ सुसमउ सिवा सन भाषा ॥
तातें रामचरितमानस बर । धरेउ नाम हियँ हेरि हरषि हर ॥ ६ ॥
कहउँ कथा सोइ सुखद सुहाई । सादर सुनहु सुजन मन लाई ॥ ७ ॥

The very sight and touch of the Sarayū, a dip into its waters or a draught from it cleanses one's sins—so declare the Vedas and Purāṇas. Even Śāradā, the goddess of learning, with Her pure intelligence cannot describe

the infinite glory of this most sacred river. The beautiful town of Ayodhyā grants an abode in Śrī Rāma's heaven; it is celebrated through all the worlds and is the holiest of the holy. There are countless living beings in this world belonging to the four species (viz., viviparous, oviparous, sweat-born and those shooting from the earth); whoever of these shed their mortal coil in Ayodhyā are never born again. Knowing the town to be charming in every way, a bestower of all forms of success and a storehouse of blessings, I commenced writing this sacred story there. The impulses of lust, arrogance and hypocrisy positively disappear from the mind of those who hear it. One derives solace by hearing its very name, *Rāmacharitamānasa* (the Mānasa lake of Śrī Rāma's exploits). The elephant of our mind, which is being scorched by the wild fire of sensuous enjoyments, is sure to get relief should it drop into this lake. The holy and beautiful *Rāmacharitamānasa* is the delight of sages; it was conceived by Śambhu (Lord Śiva). It puts down the three kinds of error, sorrow and indigence* and uproots all evil practices and impurities of the Kali age. Having conceived it, the great Lord Śiva treasured it in His mind till, when a favourable opportunity presented itself, He communicated it to His consort, Śivā (Pārvatī). Therefore, after due consideration Lord Hara joyously gave it the excellent title of *Rāmacharitamānasa*†. I repeat the same delightful and charming story; hear it reverently and attentively, O noble souls. (1—7)

दो०—जस मानस जेहि बिधि भयउ जग प्रचार जेहि हेतु ।
अब सोइ कहउँ प्रसंग सब सुमिरि उमा बृषकेतु ॥ ३५ ॥

Invoking Umā (goddess Pārvatī) and Lord Śiva (who has a bull emblazoned on His standard), I now proceed to give a full account as to what this Rāmacharitamānasa is like, how it came to be and what led to its popularity in the world. (35)

चौ०—संभु प्रसाद सुमति हियँ हुलसी । रामचरितमानस कबि तुलसी ॥
करइ मनोहर मति अनुहारी । सुजन सुचित सुनि लेहु सुधारी ॥ १ ॥
सुमति भूमि थल हृदय अगाधू । बेद पुरान उदधि घन साधू ॥
बरषहिं राम सुजस बर बारी । मधुर मनोहर मंगलकारी ॥ २ ॥
लीला सगुन जो कहहिं बखानी । सोइ स्वच्छता करइ मल हानी ॥
प्रेम भगति जो बरनि न जाई । सोइ मधुरता सुसीतलताई ॥ ३ ॥
सो जल सुकृत सालि हित होई । राम भगत जन जीवन सोई ॥
मेधा महि गत सो जल पावन । सकिलि श्रवन मग चलेउ सुहावन ॥ ४ ॥
भरेउ सुमानस सुथल थिराना । सुखद सीत रुचि चारु चिराना ॥ ५ ॥

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* The three kinds of error are those relating to thought, word and deed; birth, death and old age constitute the three kinds of sorrow and the three kinds of indigence referred to here are: (1) poverty of body, (2) poverty in men and (3) poverty of means.

† The word 'Mānasa' also denotes the mind and Lord Śiva gave this story the title of 'Rāmacharitamānasa', firstly because it contains a life-account of Śrī Rāma and secondly because He treasured it in His *mind* before communicating it to Pārvatī.

By the grace of Śambhu (Lord Śiva) a blessed idea inspired the mind of Tulasīdāsa, which made him the author of *Rāmacharitamānasa*. The author has polished his composition to the best of his intellect; yet listen to it with a sympathetic mind, O noble souls, and correct it. A refined (Sattvic) intellect is the catchment area, heart is the fathomless depression, the Vedas and Purāṇas constitute the ocean; while holy men represent the clouds which rain down pure, sweet, agreeable and blessed water in the form of Śrī Rāma's excellent glory. Pastimes of a personal God that such holy men narrate *in extenso* are the transparency of this water, which cleanses all impurity; while loving Devotion, which defies all description, represents its sweetness and coolness. This water is beneficial for the paddy crop in the form of virtuous deeds, it is life itself to the devotees of Śrī Rāma. The same holy water, when it dropped on the soil of the intellect, flowed in a volume through the beautiful channel of the ears and, collecting in the lovely spot called the heart, came to be stationary. Having remained there for a long time, it became clear, agreeable, cool and refreshing. (1—5)

दो०—सुठि सुंदर संबाद बर बिरचे बुद्धि बिचारि ।
तेइ एहि पावन सुभग सर घाट मनोहर चारि ॥ ३६ ॥

The four most beautiful and excellent dialogues (viz., those between (i) Bhuśuṇḍi and Garuḍa, (ii) Śiva and Pārvatī, (iii) Yājñavalkya and Bharadwāja and (iv) between Tulasīdāsa and other saints) that have been cleverly woven into this narrative are the four lovely Ghats of this holy and charming lake. (36)

चौ०—सप्त प्रबंध सुभग सोपाना । ग्यान नयन निरखत मन माना ॥
रघुपति महिमा अगुन अबाधा । बरनब सोइ बर बारि अगाधा ॥ १ ॥
राम सीय जस सलिल सुधासम । उपमा बीचि बिलास मनोरम ॥
पुरइनि सघन चारु चौपाई । जुगुति मंजु मनि सीप सुहाई ॥ २ ॥
छंद सोरठा सुंदर दोहा । सोइ बहुरंग कमल कुल सोहा ॥
अरथ अनूप सुभाव सुभासा । सोइ पराग मकरंद सुबासा ॥ ३ ॥
सुकृत पुंज मंजुल अलि माला । ग्यान बिराग बिचार मराला ॥
धुनि अवरेब कबित गुन जाती । मीन मनोहर ते बहुभाँती ॥ ४ ॥
अरथ धरम कामादिक चारी । कहब ग्यान बिग्यान बिचारी ॥
नव रस जप तप जोग बिरागा । ते सब जलचर चारु तड़ागा ॥ ५ ॥
सुकृती साधु नाम गुन गाना । ते बिचित्र जलबिहग समाना ॥
संतसभा चहुँ दिसि अवँराई । श्रद्धा रितु बसंत सम गाई ॥ ६ ॥
भगति निरूपन बिबिध बिधाना । छमा दया दम लता बिताना ॥
सम जम नियम फूल फल ग्याना । हरि पद रति रस बेद बखाना ॥ ७ ॥
औरउ कथा अनेक प्रसंगा । तेइ सुक पिक बहुबरन बिहंगा ॥ ८ ॥

The seven Books are the seven beautiful flights of steps, which the soul delights to look upon with the eyes of wisdom; the unqualified and unbounded greatness of Śrī Rāma, which will be presently discussed, represents the unfathomable depth of this holy water. The glory of Śrī Rāma and Sītā

constitutes the nectarean water; the similes represent the soul-ravishing sport of its wavelets. The beautiful *chaupāīs* represent the thick growth of lotus-plants; the various poetic devices constitute the lovely shells that yield beautiful pearls. The other metres, viz., Chhandas, Sorathās and Dohās, are the cluster of charming many-coloured lotuses. The incomparable sense, the beautiful ideas and the elegant expression represent the pollen, honey and fragrance of those flowers respectively. The virtuous acts mentioned therein are the charming swarms of bees; the references to spiritual enlightenment, dispassion and reason represent the swans. The implications and involutions and the various excellences and styles of poetry are the lovely fishes of various kinds. The four ends of human existence, viz., worldly riches, religious merit, enjoyment and liberation, the reasoned exposition of Jñāna (Knowledge of God in His absolute formless aspect) and Vijñāna (Knowledge of qualified Divinity both with and without form), the nine sentiments of poetry*, and the references to Japa (the muttering of mystic formulae), austerity, Yoga (contemplative union with God) and detachment from the world—all these represent the charming aquatic creatures of this lake. Eulogies on virtuous men, pious souls and the Name of God,—these correspond to water-birds of various kinds. The assemblages of saints referred to herein are the mango groves hemming the lake on all sides and piety has been likened to the vernal season. The exposition of the various types of Devotion and the references to forbearance, compassion and sense-control represent the canopies of creepers. Even so mind-control, the five Yamas or forms of self-restraint (viz., non-violence, truthfulness, non-thieving, continence and non-acquisition of property), the five Niyamas or religious vows (viz., those of external and internal purity, contentment, austerity, study of sacred books or repetition of the Divine Name and self-surrender to God) are the blossoms of these creepers, spiritual enlightenment is their fruit and loving devotion to the feet of Śrī Hari constitutes the sap of this fruit of spiritual enlightenment: so declare the Vedas. The various other episodes forming part of this narrative are the birds of different colours such as the parrot and the cuckoo. (1—8)

दो०—पुलक बाटिका बाग बन सुख सुबिहंग बिहारु ।
माली सुमन सनेह जल सींचत लोचन चारु ॥ ३७ ॥

The thrill of joy that one experiences while listening to this narrative represents the flower gardens, orchards and groves; and the delight one feels is the sporting of birds; while a noble mind is the gardener, who waters the garden etc. with the moisture of love through the charming jars of eyes. (37)

चौ०—जे गावहिं यह चरित सँभारे । तेइ एहि ताल चतुर रखवारे ॥
सदा सुनहिं सादर नर नारी । तेइ सुरबर मानस अधिकारी ॥ १ ॥
अति खल जे बिषई बग कागा । एहि सर निकट न जाहिं अभागा ॥
संबुक भेक सेवार समाना । इहाँ न बिषय कथा रस नाना ॥ २ ॥

* The nine sentiments of poetry are: (1) Śṛngāra (the erotic sentiment or the sentiment of love), (2) Hāsya (the humorous sentiment), (3) Karuṇā (the pathetic sentiment), (4) Vīra (the heroic sentiment), (5) Raudra (the sentiment of wrath or fury). (6) Bhayānaka (the sentiment of terror), (7) Bibhatsa (the sentiment of disgust), (8) Śānta (the sentiment of quietism) and (9) Adbhuta (the marvellous sentiment).

तेहि कारन आवत हियँ हारे । कामी काक बलाक बिचारे ॥
आवत एहिं सर अति कठिनाई । राम कृपा बिनु आइ न जाई ॥ ३ ॥
कठिन कुसंग कुपंथ कराला । तिन्ह के बचन बाघ हरि ब्याला ॥
गृह कारज नाना जंजाला । ते अति दुर्गम सैल बिसाला ॥ ४ ॥
बन बहु बिषम मोह मद माना । नदीं कुतर्क भयंकर नाना ॥ ५ ॥

Those who carefully recite this poem, they alone are the vigilant guardians of this lake. And those men and women who reverently hear it every day are the great gods exercising jurisdiction over this Mansarovar lake. Sensual wretches are the accursed herons and crows who never approach the lake. For here there are no varied talks of the pleasures of sense, corresponding to snails, frogs and moss. That is why poor crows and herons in the form of lustful men lack the heart to visit this place. For there is much difficulty in getting to this place and it is not possible to reach it without the grace of Śrī Rāma. Bad company, which is so obdurate, constitutes a terribly rough road; and the words of such companions are so many tigers, lions and serpents. The various occupations and entanglements of domestic life are huge mountains which are so difficult to approach. Infatuation, arrogance and pride are so many inaccessible woods; and sophisms of various kinds are frightful streams. (1—5)

दो०—जे श्रद्धा संबल रहित नहिं संतन्ह कर साथ।
तिन्ह कहुँ मानस अगम अति जिन्हहि न प्रिय रघुनाथ ॥ ३८ ॥

The Mānasa is most inaccessible to those who lack provisions for the journey in the shape of piety, who do not enjoy the company of saints and who have no love for the Lord of Raghus (Śrī Rāma). (38)

चौ०—जौं करि कष्ट जाइ पुनि कोई । जातहिं नीद जुड़ाई होई ॥
जड़ता जाड़ बिषम उर लागा । गएहुँ न मज्जन पाव अभागा ॥ १ ॥
करि न जाइ सर मज्जन पाना । फिरि आवइ समेत अभिमाना ॥
जौं बहोरि कोउ पूछन आवा । सर निंदा करि ताहि बुझावा ॥ २ ॥
सकल बिघ्न ब्यापहिं नहिं तेही । राम सुकृपाँ बिलोकहिं जेही ॥
सोइ सादर सर मज्जनु करई । महा घोर त्रय ताप न जरई ॥ ३ ॥
ते नर यह सर तजहिं न काऊ । जिन्ह कें राम चरन भल भाऊ ॥
जो नहाइ चह एहिं सर भाई । सो सतसंग करउ मन लाई ॥ ४ ॥
अस मानस मानस चख चाही । भइ कबि बुद्धि बिमल अवगाही ॥
भयउ हृदयँ आनंद उछाहू । उमगेउ प्रेम प्रमोद प्रबाहू ॥ ५ ॥
चली सुभग कबिता सरिता सो । राम बिमल जस जल भरिता सो ॥
सरजू नाम सुमंगल मूला । लोक बेद मत मंजुल कूला ॥ ६ ॥
नदी पुनीत सुमानस नंदिनि । कलि मल तृन तरु मूल निकंदिनि ॥ ७ ॥

Even if anyone makes his way to it undergoing so much hardship, he is forthwith attacked by ague in the shape of drowsiness. Benumbing cold in the shape of stupor overtakes his heart, so that the unhappy soul is deprived of a

dip even after reaching there. Finding himself unable to take a plunge into the lake or to drink from it, he returns with a feeling of pride And if anyone comes to inquire about the lake, he tries to satisfy him by vilifying it. All these obstacles do not, however, deter him whom Śrī Rāma regards with overwhelming kindness. He alone reverently bathes in the lake and thus escapes the threefold agony* of the fiercest kind. Those men who cherish ideal devotion to the feet of Śrī Rāma never quit this lake. Let him who would bathe in this lake, brother, diligently practise Satsanga (association with saints). Having seen the said Mānasa lake with the mind's eye and taken a dip into it, the poet's intellect got purged of all its dross. The heart was flooded with joy and alacrity and a torrent of love and rapture welled from it. Thence flowed a stream of beautiful poetry, carrying the water of Śrī Rāma's fair renown Sarayū is the name of this river, which is the very fountain of pure bliss. The secular viewpoint and the viewpoint of the Vedas—these represent its two charming banks. This holy stream, issuing as it does from the beautiful Mānasa lake, uproots in its course all the impurities of the Kali age, whether in the form of tiny blades of grass or of mighty trees. (1—7)

दो०—श्रोता त्रिबिध समाज पुर ग्राम नगर दुहुँ कूल ।
संत सभा अनुपम अवध सकल सुमंगल मूल ॥ ३९ ॥

The three† types of audience are the towns, villages and cities on both the banks; and the congregation of saints is the incomparable Ayodhyā, which is the fountain of all auspicious blessings. (39)

चौ०—राम भगति सुरसरितहि जाई । मिली सुकीरति सरजु सुहाई ॥
सानुज राम समर जसु पावन । मिलेउ महानदु सोन सुहावन ॥ १ ॥
जुग बिच भगति देवधुनि धारा । सोहति सहित सुबिरति बिचारा ॥
त्रिबिध ताप त्रासक तिमुहानी । राम सरूप सिंधु समुहानी ॥ २ ॥
मानस मूल मिली सुरसरिही । सुनत सुजन मन पावन करिही ॥
बिच बिच कथा बिचित्र बिभागा । जनु सरि तीर तीर बन बागा ॥ ३ ॥
उमा महेस बिबाह बराती । ते जलचर अगनित बहु भाँती ॥
रघुबर जनम अनंद बधाई । भवँर तरंग मनोहरताई ॥ ४ ॥

The beautiful Sarayū in the form of Śrī Rāma's fair renown joined the heavenly stream (Gangā) of devotion to Rāma. The latter was joined again by the charming stream of the mighty Sone in the form of the martial glory of Rāma with His younger brother Lakṣmaṇa. Intervening the two streams of Sarayū and Sone shines the celestial stream of Devotion blended with noble dispassion and reason. This triple stream, which scares away the threefold agony referred to above, headed towards the ocean of Śrī Rāma's divine personality.

* The three kinds of agony referred to above are:

(1) that inflicted by other living beings, (ii) that proceeding from natural causes and (iii) that caused by bodily or mental distemper.

† The three types of listeners referred to here may be understood to mean (i) liberated souls, (ii) seekers of liberation and (iii) sensually-minded men.

With its source in the Mānasa lake and united with the celestial river (Gangā), the Sarayū of Śrī Rāma's fame will purify the mind of the pious souls who listen to it, while the strange episodes interspersed here and there are the groves and gardens as it were adjoining the river banks. The bridegroom's party in the wedding of Goddess Umā (Pārvatī) and the great Lord Śiva are the numberless aquatic creatures of various kinds. The rejoicings and felicitations that attended the advent of Śrī Rāma, the Chief of Raghus represent the charm of the eddies and waves. (1—4)

दो०—बालचरित चहु बंधु के बनज बिपुल बहु रंग ।
नृप रानी परिजन सुकृत मधुकर बारिबिहंग ॥ ४० ॥

The childlike sports of the four divine brothers are the numerous lotus flowers of varied colours; while the stock of merits of King Daśaratha and his consorts and court represent the bees and water-birds. (40)

चौ०—सीय स्वयंबर कथा सुहाई । सरित सुहावनि सो छबि छाई ॥
नदी नाव पटु प्रस्न अनेका । केवट कुसल उतर सबिबेका ॥ १ ॥
सुनि अनुकथन परस्पर होई । पथिक समाज सोह सरि सोई ॥
घोर धार भृगुनाथ रिसानी । घाट सुबद्ध राम बर बानी ॥ २ ॥
सानुज राम बिबाह उछाहू । सो सुभ उमग सुखद सब काहू ॥
कहत सुनत हरषहिं पुलकाहीं । ते सुकृती मन मुदित नहाहीं ॥ ३ ॥
राम तिलक हित मंगल साजा । परब जोग जनु जुरे समाजा ॥
काई कुमति केकई केरी । परी जासु फल बिपति घनेरी ॥ ४ ॥

The fascinating story of Sītā's choice-marriage is the delightful charm surrounding the river. The numerous pertinent questions are the boats on the river, while the judicious replies to the same are the skilled boatmen. The conversation that follows the narration of the story is the crowd of travellers moving along the river banks. The wrath of Paraśurāma (the Lord of Bhṛgus) represents the furious current of this river; while Śrī Rāma's soft words are the strongly built ghats on the banks. The festivities connected with the wedding of Śrī Rāma and His younger brothers represent the graceful swell in the river, which is a source of delight to all. Those who rejoice and experience a thrill of joy in narrating or hearing the story are the lucky souls who take an exhilarating dip in the river. The auspicious preparations that were gone through in connection with the installation of Śrī Rāma as the Yuvarāja (Prince-regent) represent as it were the crowds of bathers assembled at the river bank on a sacred occasion. Kaikeyī's evil counsel represents the moss on the bank, which brought a serious calamity in its wake.

(1—4)

दो०—समन अमित उतपात सब भरत चरित जपजाग ।
कलि अघ खल अवगुन कथन ते जल मल बग काग ॥ ४१ ॥

The story of Bharata, which wards off all calamities, is a congregational muttering of sacred formulae carried on at the river bank, while the references to

the corruptions of the Kali age and to the evil propensities of wicked souls represent the scum on the water as well as the herons and crows living by the riverside. (41)

चौ०—कीरति सरित छहूँ रितु रूरी । समय सुहावनि पावनि भूरी ॥
हिम हिमसैलसुता सिव ब्याहू । सिसिर सुखद प्रभु जनम उछाहू ॥ १ ॥
बरनब राम बिबाह समाजू । सो मुद मंगलमय रितुराजू ॥
ग्रीषम दुसह राम बन गवनू । पंथ कथा खर आतप पवनू ॥ २ ॥
बरषा घोर निसाचर रारी । सुर कुल सालि सुमंगलकारी ॥
राम राज सुख बिनय बड़ाई । बिसद सुखद सोइ सरद सुहाई ॥ ३ ॥
सती सिरोमनि सिय गुन गाथा । सोइ गुन अमल अनूपम पाथा ॥
भरत सुभाउ सुसीतलताई । सदा एकरस बरनि न जाई ॥ ४ ॥

The river of Śrī Rāma's glory is delightful during all the six seasons; it is exceedingly charming and holy at all times. The wedding of Goddess Pārvatī (the daughter of Himavān) with Lord Śiva represents Hemanta or the cold season while the festival connected with the Lord's advent represents the delightful Śiśira or chilly season. The story of the preparations for Śrī Rāma's wedding constitutes the vernal season* (the king of all seasons), which abounds in joy and felicity; while Śrī Rāma's departure for the forest constitutes the oppressive hot weather and the tale of His wanderings represents the blazing sun and hot winds. The terrible conflict with the demons represents the rainy season, which constituted a veritable blessing to the paddy crop in the form of gods; while the prosperity attending Śrī Rāma's reign, His politeness and glory represent the cloudless, delightful and charming autumn. The recital of the virtues of Sītā, the crest-jewel of faithful wives, constitutes the excellence of the transparent and incomparable water. And Bharata's amiability represents its coolness, which is uniform at all times and beyond description. (1—4)

दो०—अवलोकनि बोलनि मिलनि प्रीति परसपर हास ।
भायप भलि चहु बंधु की जल माधुरी सुबास ॥ ४२ ॥

The way the four brothers look at one another, talk with one another, meet and love one another, their mirth and their ideal brotherliness—these constitute the sweetness and fragrance of the water. (42)

चौ०—आरति बिनय दीनता मोरी । लघुता ललित सुबारि न थोरी ॥
अदभुत सलिल सुनत गुनकारी । आस पिआस मनोमल हारी ॥ १ ॥

* The months of Mārgaśirṣa and Pauṣa (corresponding roughly to November and December) constitute the cold season; Māgha and Phālguna (corresponding roughly to January and February) constitute the chilly season; the months of Chaitra and Vaiśākha (corresponding roughly to March and April) constitute the vernal season; Jyeṣṭha and Āṣāḍha (corresponding roughly to May and June) constitute the hot weather; Śrāvaṇa and Bhādrapada (corresponding roughly to July and August) constitute the rainy season and Āświna and Kārtika (corresponding roughly to September and October) constitute the autumnal season.

राम सुप्रेमहि पोषत पानी । हरत सकल कलि कलुष गलानी ॥
भव श्रम सोषक तोषक तोषा । समन दुरित दुख दारिद दोषा ॥ २ ॥
काम कोह मद मोह नसावन । बिमल बिबेक बिराग बढ़ावन ॥
सादर मज्जन पान किए तें । मिटहिं पाप परिताप हिए तें ॥ ३ ॥
जिन्ह एहिं बारि न मानस धोए । ते कायर कलि काल बिगोए ॥
तृषित निरखि रबि कर भव बारी । फिरिहहिं मृग जिमि जीव दुखारी ॥ ४ ॥

My intense longing, supplication and humility represent the not inconsiderable lightness of this pure and holy water. This marvellous water heals by the mere hearing, quenches the thirst of desire and washes the dirt of the mind. This water nourishes true love for Śrī Rāma and drives away all the sins of the Kali age as well as the feeling of self-depreciation resulting therefrom. It relieves the fatigue of transmigration, gratifies gratification itself and puts an end to sin, sorrow, indigence and error. It wipes out lust, anger, pride and infatuation and enhances pure wisdom and dispassion. By reverently bathing in it and drinking from it all traces of sin and remorse are obliterated from the heart. Those who have not washed their heart with this water are wretches that have been duped by the age of Kali. These creatures, wandering in pursuit of sensuous pleasures, will come to grief even as a thirsty deer runs after a mirage mistaking it for real water and returns disappointed.

(1—4)

दो०—मति अनुहारि सुबारि गुन गन गनि मन अन्हवाइ ।
सुमिरि भवानी संकरहि कह कबि कथा सुहाइ ॥ ४३ (क) ॥
अब रघुपति पद पंकरुह हियँ धरि पाइ प्रसाद ।
कहउँ जुगल मुनिबर्य कर मिलन सुभग संबाद ॥ ४३ (ख) ॥

Having enumerated the virtues of this excellent water to the best of his intellectual capacity and bathed his mind in it, and remembering Goddess Bhavānī (Pārvatī) and Lord Śankara, the poet (Tulasīdāsa) narrates the beautiful story. Installing in my heart the lotus feet of the Lord of Raghus and thus securing His grace, I now proceed to relate the charming story of the meeting of the two great sages (Yājñavalkya and Bharadwāja).

(43 A—B)

चौ०—भरद्वाज मुनि बसहिं प्रयागा । तिन्हहि राम पद अति अनुरागा ॥
तापस सम दम दया निधाना । परमारथ पथ परम सुजाना ॥ १ ॥
माघ मकरगत रबि जब होई । तीरथपतिहिं आव सब कोई ॥
देव दनुज किंनर नर श्रेनीं । सादर मज्जहिं सकल त्रिबेनीं ॥ २ ॥
पूजहिं माधव पद जलजाता । परसि अखय बटु हरषहिं गाता ॥
भरद्वाज आश्रम अति पावन । परम रम्य मुनिबर मन भावन ॥ ३ ॥
तहाँ होइ मुनि रिषय समाजा । जाहिं जे मज्जन तीरथराजा ॥
मज्जहिं प्रात समेत उछाहा । कहहिं परसपर हरि गुन गाहा ॥ ४ ॥

The sage Bharadwāja lives in Prayāga; he is extremely devoted to the feet of Śrī Rāma. A great ascetic and an embodiment of self-restraint, composure of mind and compassion, he is highly advanced on the spiritual path. In the month of Māgha, when the sun enters the sign of Capricorn, every one visits the chief of holy places, Prayāga. Troops of gods and demons, Kinnaras (demigods) and men, all devoutly bathe in the triple stream of the Gangā, Yamunā and Saraswatī. They worship the lotus feet of God Vindumādhava (the presiding deity of Prayāga); and the touch of the immortal banyan tree sends a thrill into their limbs. The hermitage of Bharadwāja is a most sacred spot, exceedingly charming and attractive even to great hermits and the haunt of sages and seers who go to bathe at that holiest of holy places. At daybreak they all perform their ablutions with religious fervour and then converse together on the virtues of Śrī Hari. (1—4)

दो०—ब्रह्म निरूपन धरम बिधि बरनहिं तत्त्व बिभाग ।
कहहिं भगति भगवंत कै संजुत ग्यान बिराग ॥ ४४ ॥

They discuss the nature of Brahma (the Supreme Eternal), the precepts of religion and the classification of fundamental entities and expatiate on Devotion to the Lord coupled with spiritual enlightenment and dispassion. (44)

चौ०—एहि प्रकार भरि माघ नहाहीं । पुनि सब निज निज आश्रम जाहीं ॥
प्रति संबत अति होइ अनंदा । मकर मज्जि गवनहिं मुनिबृंदा ॥ १ ॥
एक बार भरि मकर नहाए । सब मुनीस आश्रमन्ह सिधाए ॥
जागबलिक मुनि परम बिबेकी । भरद्वाज राखे पद टेकी ॥ २ ॥
सादर चरन सरोज पखारे । अति पुनीत आसन बैठारे ॥
करि पूजा मुनि सुजसु बखानी । बोले अति पुनीत मृदु बानी ॥ ३ ॥
नाथ एक संसउ बड़ मोरें । करगत बेदतत्त्व सबु तोरें ॥
कहत सो मोहि लागत भय लाजा । जौं न कहउँ बड़ होइ अकाजा ॥ ४ ॥

In this way they bathe for the whole month of Māgha and then return each to his hermitage. There is a great rejoicing every year and having performed their ablutions while the sun stays in Capricorn the hosts of sages disperse. Having bathed on one occasion for the whole period of the sun's stay in Capricorn when all the great sages had left for their hermitages, Bharadwāja clasped by the feet and detained the supremely wise saint Yājñavalkya. He reverently washed the latter's lotus feet and installed him on a most sacred seat. And extolling his fair renown with religious ceremony, Bharadwāja spoke in mild and reverential tones, "A grave doubt haunts my mind, holy sir! and the whole mystery of the Vedas stands revealed to you. I am afraid and ashamed to utter the doubt; and I lose a great opportunity if I keep it back. (1—4)

दो०—संत कहहिं असि नीति प्रभु श्रुति पुरान मुनि गाव ।
होइ न बिमल बिबेक उर गुर सन किएँ दुराव ॥ ४५ ॥

"The saints lay down the rule, and the Vedas as well as the Purāṇas and sages too loudly proclaim, that pure wisdom cannot dawn in the heart, should one keep anything concealed from one's spiritual preceptor. (45)

चौ०—अस बिचारि प्रगटउँ निज मोहू । हरहु नाथ करि जन पर छोहू ॥
राम नाम कर अमित प्रभावा । संत पुरान उपनिषद गावा ॥ १ ॥
संतत जपत संभु अबिनासी । सिव भगवान ग्यान गुन रासी ॥
आकर चारि जीव जग अहहीं । कासीं मरत परम पद लहहीं ॥ २ ॥
सोपि राम महिमा मुनिराया । सिव उपदेसु करत करि दाया ॥
रामु कवन प्रभु पूछउँ तोही । कहिअ बुझाइ कृपानिधि मोही ॥ ३ ॥
एक राम अवधेस कुमारा । तिन्ह कर चरित बिदित संसारा ॥
नारि बिरहँ दुखु लहेउ अपारा । भयउ रोषु रन रावनु मारा ॥ ४ ॥

"Remembering this I disclose my folly; dispel it, taking pity on this servant, my lord ! The saints as well as the Purāṇas and the Upaniṣads too declare that the potency of the name 'Rāma' is unlimited. The immortal Lord Śiva, who is the fountain of joy and a storehouse of wisdom and goodness, incessantly repeats It. There are four broad divisions of living beings in the world; such of them as die in the holy city of Kāśī (Banaras) attain to the highest state. This too marks the glory of Śrī Rāma's Name, O chief of sages; for it is this very Name that Lord Śiva mercifully imparts to the dying soul in Kāśī. I ask you, my lord, who that Rāma is; pray explain to me, O storehouse of compassion. One such Rāma is the prince of Ayodhyā, whose exploits are known throughout the world. Infinite was his sorrow due to the loss of his wife, and flying into a rage he slew Rāvana in battle. (1—4)

दो०—प्रभु सोइ राम कि अपर कोउ जाहि जपत त्रिपुरारि ।
सत्य धाम सर्बग्य तुम्ह कहहु बिबेकु बिचारि ॥ ४६ ॥

"Is it this very Rāma, my lord, or some one else whose name the Slayer of the demon Tripura, Śiva, ever repeats ? You are an embodiment of truth and omniscient; so ponder well and give me your considered reply. (46)

चौ०—जैसें मिटै मोर भ्रम भारी । कहहु सो कथा नाथ बिस्तारी ॥
जागबलिक बोले मुसुकाई । तुम्हहि बिदित रघुपति प्रभुताई ॥ १ ॥
राम भगत तुम्ह मन क्रम बानी । चतुराई तुम्हारि मैं जानी ॥
चाहहु सुनै राम गुन गूढ़ा । कीन्हिहु प्रस्न मनहुँ अति मूढ़ा ॥ २ ॥
तात सुनहु सादर मनु लाई । कहउँ राम कै कथा सुहाई ॥
महामोहु महिषेसु बिसाला । राम कथा कालिका कराला ॥ ३ ॥
राम कथा ससि किरन समाना । संत चकोर करहिं जेहि पाना ॥
ऐसेइ संसय कीन्ह भवानी । महादेव तब कहा बखानी ॥ ४ ॥

"Tell me in detail, my master, the story whereby my overwhelming perplexity may be overcome." Yājñavalkya smilingly said, "The glory of the Lord of Raghus is already known to you. You are a devotee of Rāma in thought, word and deed; I have come to know your ingenuity. You wish to hear an account of the hidden virtues of Rāma; that is why you have questioned me as if you were quite ignorant. Listen, then, with devout attention, my child, while I narrate the beautiful story of Rāma. Appalling ignorance is the gigantic

demon Mahiṣāsura (so called because he was endowed with the form of a buffalo); while the narrative of Rāma is the dread Kālikā* (who made short work of the demon). The story of Rāma is like the moonbeams that are drunk in by the *chakora* bird in the form of saints A similar doubt was expressed by no less a personage than Bhavānī (Goddess Pārvatī), and the great god Śiva then expounded the matter in detail. (1—4)

दो०—कहउँ सो मति अनुहारि अब उमा संभु संबाद ।
भयउ समय जेहि हेतु जेहि सुनु मुनि मिटिहि बिषाद ॥ ४७ ॥

I shall repeat now to the best of my lights the dialogue between Umā (Goddess Pārvatī) and Śambhu (Lord Śiva). Hear, O sage, the time and the occasion of this dialogue; your gloom will be lifted. (47)

चौ०—एक बार त्रेता जुग माहीं । संभु गए कुंभज रिषि पाहीं ॥
संग सती जगजननि भवानी । पूजे रिषि अखिलेस्वर जानी ॥ १ ॥
राम कथा मुनिबर्ज बखानी । सुनी महेस परम सुखु मानी ॥
रिषि पूछी हरि भगति सुहाई । कही संभु अधिकारी पाई ॥ २ ॥
कहत सुनत रघुपति गुन गाथा । कछु दिन तहाँ रहे गिरिनाथा ॥
मुनि सन बिदा मागि त्रिपुरारी । चले भवन सँग दच्छकुमारी ॥ ३ ॥
तेहि अवसर भंजन महि भारा । हरि रघुबंस लीन्ह अवतारा ॥
पिता बचन तजि राजु उदासी । दंडक बन बिचरत अबिनासी ॥ ४ ॥

Once upon a time, in the age of Tretā, Lord Śiva called on the jar-born sage Agastya. His consort, Goddess Satī, Mother of the universe, accompanied Him. The sage worshipped Him knowing Him to be the universal lord. The great sage narrated at length the story of Rāma and Lord Maheśa listened to it with extreme delight. The sage then inquired about Devotion to Hari and Śambhu discoursed on it finding in the sage a fit recipient. Thus narrating and hearing the tale of Śrī Rāma's virtues, the Lord of Kailāsa (Śiva) spent some days there. Finally, asking leave of the sage, the Slayer of the demon Tripura, Śankara, proceeded to His home (Mount Kailāsa) with Dakṣa's daughter (Satī). During those very days, with a view to relieving the burden of the earth, Śrī Hari had descended in the line of King Raghu. Renouncing His right to the Throne at the word of His father (Daśaratha), the immortal Lord was wandering in the Daṇḍaka forest in the garb of an ascetic. (1—4)

दो०—हृदयँ बिचारत जात हर केहि बिधि दरसनु होइ ।
गुप्त रूप अवतरेउ प्रभु गएँ जान सबु कोइ ॥ ४८ (क) ॥
सो०—संकर उर अति छोभु सती न जानहिं मरमु सोइ ।
तुलसी दरसन लोभु मन डरु लोचन लालची ॥ ४८ (ख) ॥

Lord Hara (Śiva) kept pondering as He went, "How can I obtain a sight of Him ? The Lord has bodied Himself forth secretly; and if I visit Him, everyone will know who He is" In Śankara's heart there was a great tumult;

* The story is told in *Durgā-Saptaśatī* or the *Chaṇḍī*, a work most popular with the Hindus and forming part of the *Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa*.

Satī, however, had no inkling of this secret. His mind, says Tulasīdāsa, apprehended lest the secret might be disclosed while the temptation of obtaining a sight of the Lord made His eyes wistful. (48 A—B)

चौ०—रावन मरन मनुज कर जाचा । प्रभु बिधि बचनु कीन्ह चह साचा ॥
जौं नहिं जाउँ रहइ पछितावा । करत बिचारु न बनत बनावा ॥ १ ॥
एहि बिधि भए सोचबस ईसा । तेही समय जाइ दससीसा ॥
लीन्ह नीच मारीचहि संगा । भयउ तुरत सोइ कपटकुरंगा ॥ २ ॥
करि छलु मूढ़ हरी बैदेही । प्रभु प्रभाउ तस बिदित न तेही ॥
मृग बधि बंधु सहित हरि आए । आश्रमु देखि नयन जल छाए ॥ ३ ॥
बिरह बिकल नर इव रघुराई । खोजत बिपिन फिरत दोउ भाई ॥
कबहूँ जोग बियोग न जाकें । देखा प्रगट बिरह दुखु ताकें ॥ ४ ॥

"Rāvaṇa (the demon king of Lankā) had sought from Brahmā the boon of death at the hands of a human foe; and the Lord would have the words of Brahmā come true. If I do not go to meet Him, I shall ever regret it." Śiva pondered, but found no solution to the puzzle. The Lord was thus lost in a reverie. Meanwhile the vile Rāvaṇa (who had no less than ten heads) took with him the demon Mārīcha, who forthwith assumed the illusory form of a deer. The fool (Rāvaṇa) carried off King Videha's daughter (Sītā) by fraud; the Lord's real might was not known to him. Having killed the antelope Śrī Hari returned with His brother (Lakṣmaṇa); and His eyes were filled with tears when He saw the empty hermitage. The Lord of Raghus felt distressed at the loss like a mortal man, and the two brothers roamed about in the woods in search of Her. He who knows neither union nor separation showed unmistakeable signs of grief born of separation. (1—4)

दो०—अति बिचित्र रघुपति चरित जानहिं परम सुजान ।
जे मतिमंद बिमोह बस हृदयँ धरहिं कछु आन ॥ ४९ ॥

Exceedingly mysterious are the ways of the Lord of Raghus, the supremely wise alone can comprehend them. The dull-witted in their height of folly imagine something quite different. (49)

चौ०—संभु समय तेहि रामहि देखा । उपजा हियँ अति हरषु बिसेषा ॥
भरि लोचन छबिसिंधु निहारी । कुसमय जानि न कीन्हि चिन्हारी ॥ १ ॥
जय सच्चिदानंद जग पावन । अस कहि चलेउ मनोज नसावन ॥
चले जात सिव सती समेता । पुनि पुनि पुलकत कृपानिकेता ॥ २ ॥
सतीं सो दसा संभु कै देखी । उर उपजा संदेहु बिसेषी ॥
संकरु जगतबंद्य जगदीसा । सुर नर मुनि सब नावत सीसा ॥ ३ ॥
तिन्ह नृपसुतहि कीन्ह परनामा । कहि सच्चिदानंद परधामा ॥
भए मगन छबि तासु बिलोकी । अजहुँ प्रीति उर रहति न रोकी ॥ ४ ॥

On that very occasion Śambhu saw Śrī Rāma and excessive joy of an extraordinary type welled up in His heart. He feasted His eyes on that Ocean of Beauty; but He did not disclose His identity as He knew it

was no appropriate occasion for the same. The Destroyer of Cupid, Śiva, passed on exclaiming: "Glory to the Redeemer of the universe, who is all Truth, Consciousness and Bliss !" As Śiva went on His way with Satī, the all-merciful Lord was repeatedly thrilled with joy. When Satī beheld Śambhu in this state, a grave doubt arose in Her mind: "Śankara is a lord of the universe Himself, and deserves universal adoration, gods, men and sages all bow their head to Him. Yet He made obeisance to this prince, referring to him as the Supreme Being who is all Truth, Consciousness and Bliss. He was enraptured to behold his beauty and felt an upsurge of emotion in His heart, which He is unable to control even to this moment! (1—4)

दो०—ब्रह्म जो ब्यापक बिरज अज अकल अनीह अभेद ।
सो कि देह धरि होइ नर जाहि न जानत बेद ॥ ५० ॥

"The Supreme Eternal, which is all-pervading, unbegotten, without parts, free from desire, beyond Māyā and beyond all distinction, and which not even the Vedas can comprehend,—can It assume the shape of a man ? (50)

चौ०—बिष्नु जो सुर हित नरतनु धारी । सोउ सर्बग्य जथा त्रिपुरारी ॥
खोजइ सो कि अग्य इव नारी । ग्यानधाम श्रीपति असुरारी ॥ १ ॥
संभु गिरा पुनि मृषा न होई । सिव सर्बग्य जान सबु कोई ॥
अस संसय मन भयउ अपारा । होइ न हृदयँ प्रबोध प्रचारा ॥ २ ॥
जद्यपि प्रगट न कहेउ भवानी । हर अंतरजामी सब जानी ॥
सुनहि सती तव नारि सुभाऊ । संसय अस न धरिअ उर काऊ ॥ ३ ॥
जासु कथा कुंभज रिषि गाई । भगति जासु मैं मुनिहि सुनाई ॥
सोइ मम इष्टदेव रघुबीरा । सेवत जाहि सदा मुनि धीरा ॥ ४ ॥

"Even Viṣṇu, who takes a human form for the sake of gods, is omniscient like the Slayer of Tripura, Śiva. Can He wander in search of His Consort like an ignorant man,—He who is a repository of knowledge, the lord of Śrī (the goddess of prosperity) and the slayer of demons ? The words of Śambhu too cannot be false. Everyone knows that He is all-wise " Thus Her mind was filled with an interminable series of doubts; Her heart could not be pacified by any means. Although Bhavānī (Goddess Pārvatī) did not open Her lips, Lord Hara, who is the inner controller of all, came to know everything. "Look here, Satī, the woman is foremost in you; you should never harbour such a doubt in your mind. He is no other than Rāma, the Hero of Raghu's race, My beloved Deity, whose story was sung by the jar-born sage Agastya, faith in whom was the subject of the talk I gave to him and whom illumined sages ever wait upon. (1—4)

छं०—मुनि धीर जोगी सिद्ध संतत बिमल मन जेहि ध्यावहीं ।
कहि नेति निगम पुरान आगम जासु कीरति गावहीं ॥
सोइ रामु ब्यापक ब्रह्म भुवन निकाय पति माया धनी ।
अवतरेउ अपने भगत हित निजतंत्र नित रघुकुलमनी ॥

"He who has bodied Himself forth as the Jewel of Raghu's race for the sake of His devotees is no other than the Supreme Eternal, who is all-pervading and ever free, who is the Ruler of all the worlds and the Lord of Māyā, whom illumined sages, Yogīs (mystics) and Siddhas (adepts) constantly meditate upon with their sinless mind and whose glory is sung by the Vedas as well as the Purāṇas and other scriptures in negative terms as 'not this'."

सो०—लाग न उर उपदेसु जदपि कहेउ सिवँ बार बहु ।
बोले बिहसि महेसु हरि माया बलु जानि जियँ ॥ ५१ ॥

Although Lord Śiva repeated this time after time, His exhortation made no impression on the heart of Satī. Then the great Lord Śiva smilingly said, realizing in His heart the potency of Śrī Hari's Māyā:— (51)

चौ०—जौं तुम्हरें मन अति संदेहू । तौ किन जाइ परीछा लेहू ॥
तब लगि बैठ अहउँ बट छाहीं । जब लगि तुम्ह ऐहहु मोहि पाहीं ॥ १ ॥
जैसें जाइ मोह भ्रम भारी । करेहु सो जतनु बिबेक बिचारी ॥
चलीं सती सिव आयसु पाई । करहिं बिचारु करौं का भाई ॥ २ ॥
इहाँ संभु अस मन अनुमाना । दच्छसुता कहुँ नहिं कल्याना ॥
मोरेहु कहें न संसय जाहीं । बिधि बिपरीत भलाई नाहीं ॥ ३ ॥
होइहि सोइ जो राम रचि राखा । को करि तर्क बढ़ावै साखा ॥
अस कहि लगे जपन हरि नामा । गईं सती जहँ प्रभु सुखधामा ॥ ४ ॥

"If you have a grave doubt in your mind, why not go and verify the thing? I shall be waiting in the shade of this banyan tree till you come back to Me. Using your critical judgment you should resort to some device whereby the stupendous error born of your ignorance may be rectified." Thus obtaining leave of Śiva, Satī proceeded on Her mission. She racked Her brains to find out what step She should take (in order to test the divinity of Rāma). On this side Śiva came to the conclusion that mischief was in store for Dakṣa's daughter (Satī). "When her doubt did not yield even to My assurances," He said to Himself, "it seems the stars are unpropitious to her and no good will come out of it. After all, whatever Śrī Rāma has willed must come to pass; why should one add to the complication by indulging in further speculation?" So saying, Lord Śiva began to mutter the name of Śrī Hari; while Satī proceeded to the spot where the all-blissful Lord (Śrī Rāma) was. (1—4)

दो०—पुनि पुनि हृदयँ बिचारु करि धरि सीता कर रूप ।
आगें होइ चलि पंथ तेहिं जेहिं आवत नरभूप ॥ ५२ ॥

After many an anxious thought Satī assumed the form of Sītā and moved ahead on the same route along which the Ruler of men (Śrī Rāma) was passing. (52)

चौ०—लछिमन दीख उमाकृत बेषा । चकित भए भ्रम हृदयँ बिसेषा ॥
कहि न सकत कछु अति गंभीरा । प्रभु प्रभाउ जानत मतिधीरा ॥ १ ॥

सती कपटु जानेउ सुरस्वामी । सबदरसी सब अंतरजामी ॥
सुमिरत जाहि मिटइ अग्याना । सोइ सरबग्य रामु भगवाना ॥ २ ॥
सती कीन्ह चह तहँहुँ दुराऊ । देखहु नारि सुभाव प्रभाऊ ॥
निज माया बलु हृदयँ बखानी । बोले बिहसि रामु मृदु बानी ॥ ३ ॥
जोरि पानि प्रभु कीन्ह प्रनामू । पिता समेत लीन्ह निज नामू ॥
कहेउ बहोरि कहाँ बृषकेतू । बिपिन अकेलि फिरहु केहि हेतू ॥ ४ ॥

When Lakṣmaṇa saw Umā (Satī) in Her disguise, he was astonished and much puzzled. He was tongue-tied and looked very grave; the sagacious brother was acquainted with the Lord's glory. All-perceiving and the inner controller of all, the lord of gods, Śrī Rāma, took no time in detecting the false appearance of Satī. Rāma was the same omniscient Lord whose very thought wipes out ignorance. Satī sought to practise deception even on Him: see how deep-rooted the nature of a woman is! Extolling in His heart the potency of His Māyā (delusive power), Śrī Rāma smilingly accosted Her in a mild tone. Joining the palms of His hands, He first made obeisance to Her mentioning His name along with His father's. He then asked Her the whereabouts of Lord Śiva (who has a bull emblazoned on His standard) and wondered what made Her roam about all alone in the forest. (1—4)

दो०—राम बचन मृदु गूढ़ सुनि उपजा अति संकोचु ।
सती सभीत महेस पहिं चलीं हृदयँ बड़ सोचु ॥ ५३ ॥

Satī felt very uncomfortable when She heard these soft yet significant words of Rāma. She turned towards the great Lord Śiva with a feeling of awe and much dejected at heart. (53)

चौ०—मैं संकर कर कहा न माना । निज अग्यानु राम पर आना ॥
जाइ उतरु अब देहउँ काहा । उर उपजा अति दारुन दाहा ॥ १ ॥
जाना राम सतीं दुखु पावा । निज प्रभाउ कछु प्रगटि जनावा ॥
सतीं दीख कौतुकु मग जाता । आगें रामु सहित श्री भ्राता ॥ २ ॥
फिरि चितवा पाछें प्रभु देखा । सहित बंधु सिय सुंदर बेषा ॥
जहँ चितवहिं तहँ प्रभु आसीना । सेवहिं सिद्ध मुनीस प्रबीना ॥ ३ ॥
देखे सिव बिधि बिष्नु अनेका । अमित प्रभाउ एक तें एका ॥
बंदत चरन करत प्रभु सेवा । बिबिध बेष देखे सब देवा ॥ ४ ॥

"I heeded not the words of Śankara and imposed My own ignorance on Rāma. What reply shall I give to my lord now?" The agony of Her heart was most terrible. Śrī Rāma perceived that Satī had got vexed; He, therefore, revealed to Her a part of His glory. As She went on Her way Satī beheld a strange phenomenon. Rāma was going ahead of Her along with His Consort, Sītā, and His younger brother, Lakṣmaṇa. She looked back and there too She saw the Lord with His brother and Sītā in an attractive garb. Whichever way She turned Her eyes, there was the Lord enthroned with the Siddhas (adepts) and illumined sages ministering to Him. Satī saw more than one sets of Śiva,

Brahmā and Viṣṇu, each set possessing a glory infinitely greater than that of the others. She also beheld a whole host of gods bowing at the Lord's feet and waiting upon Him in their different garbs. (1—4)

दो०—सती बिधात्री इंदिरा देखीं अमित अनूप ।
जेहिं जेहिं बेष अजादि सुर तेहि तेहि तन अनुरूप ॥ ५४ ॥

She further perceived innumerable Satīs (consorts of Śiva), consorts of Brahmā and Lakṣmīs (consorts of Viṣṇu), all peerless in beauty. They conformed in their appearance to the garb in which Brahmā and the other gods appeared. (54)

चौ०—देखे जहँ तहँ रघुपति जेते । सक्तिन्ह सहित सकल सुर तेते ॥
जीव चराचर जो संसारा । देखे सकल अनेक प्रकारा ॥ १ ॥
पूजहिं प्रभुहि देव बहु बेषा । राम रूप दूसर नहिं देखा ॥
अवलोके रघुपति बहुतेरे । सीता सहित न बेष घनेरे ॥ २ ॥
सोइ रघुबर सोइ लछिमनु सीता । देखि सती अति भईं सभीता ॥
हृदय कंप तन सुधि कछु नाहीं । नयन मूदि बैठीं मग माहीं ॥ ३ ॥
बहुरि बिलोकेउ नयन उघारी । कछु न दीख तहँ दच्छकुमारी ॥
पुनि पुनि नाइ राम पद सीसा । चलीं तहाँ जहँ रहे गिरीसा ॥ ४ ॥

Each separate vision of Rāma was attended by a whole host of gods with their feminine counterparts, as well as by the whole animate and inanimate creation with its multitudinous species. But while the gods who adored the Lord appeared in diverse garbs, the appearance of Śrī Rāma was the same in every case. Although She saw many Rāmas with as many Sītās, their garb did not vary. Seeing the same Rāma, the same Lakṣmaṇa and the same Sītā, Satī was struck with great awe. Her heart quivered, and She lost all consciousness of Her body. Closing Her eyes She sat down on the wayside. When She opened Her eyes and gazed once more, the daughter of Dakṣa saw nothing there. Repeatedly bowing Her head at the feet of Śrī Rāma, She proceeded to the spot where the Lord of Kailāsa was. (1—4)

चौ०—गईं समीप महेस तब हँसि पूछी कुसलात ।
लीन्हि परीछा कवन बिधि कहहु सत्य सब बात ॥ ५५ ॥

When She came near, Lord Śiva smilingly inquired if all was well with Her and then said, "Tell me now the whole truth, how did you test Śrī Rāma ?" (55)

[PAUSE 2 FOR A THIRTY-DAY RECITATION]

चौ०—सतीं समुझि रघुबीर प्रभाऊ । भय बस सिव सन कीन्ह दुराऊ ॥
कछु न परीछा लीन्हि गोसाईं । कीन्ह प्रनामु तुम्हारिहि नाईं ॥ १ ॥
जो तुम्ह कहा सो मृषा न होई । मोरें मन प्रतीति अति सोई ॥
तब संकर देखेउ धरि ध्याना । सतीं जो कीन्ह चरित सबु जाना ॥ २ ॥

बहुरि राम मायहि सिरु नावा । प्रेरि सतिहि जेहिं झूँठ कहावा ॥
हरि इच्छा भावी बलवाना । हृदयँ बिचारत संभु सुजाना ॥ ३ ॥
सतीं कीन्ह सीता कर बेषा । सिव उर भयउ बिषाद बिसेषा ॥
जौं अब करउँ सती सन प्रीती । मिटइ भगति पथु होइ अनीती ॥ ४ ॥

Having realized the greatness of the Hero of Raghu's race, Satī in Her awe concealed the truth from Śiva. "I made no test, my lord; I made obeisance just like You. What You said cannot be untrue; I am fully convinced in my heart." Lord Śankara then looked within by contemplation and came to know all that Satī had done. Again, He bowed His head to the delusive power of Śrī Rāma, that had prompted Satī to tell a lie. What has been preordained by the will of Śrī Hari must have its way, the all-wise Śambhu thought within Himself. Satī had assumed the disguise of Sītā. this made Śiva much disconsolate at heart. "If I continue to love Satī as heretofore, the cult of Devotion will disappear and it will be indecorous on My part to do so. (1—4)

दो०—परम पुनीत न जाइ तजि किएँ प्रेम बड़ पापु ।
प्रगटि न कहत महेसु कछु हृदयँ अधिक संतापु ॥ ५६ ॥

"Satī is too chaste to be abandoned, and it is a great sin to love her any more as a wife." The great Lord Śiva uttered not a word aloud, although there was great agony in His heart. (56)

चौ०—तब संकर प्रभु पद सिरु नावा । सुमिरत रामु हृदयँ अस आवा ॥
एहिं तन सतिहि भेट मोहि नाहीं । सिव संकल्पु कीन्ह मन माहीं ॥ १ ॥
अस बिचारि संकरु मतिधीरा । चले भवन सुमिरत रघुबीरा ॥
चलत गगन भै गिरा सुहाई । जय महेस भलि भगति दृढ़ाई ॥ २ ॥
अस पन तुम्ह बिनु करइ को आना । राम भगत समरथ भगवाना ॥
सुनि नभगिरा सती उर सोचा । पूछा सिवहि समेत सकोचा ॥ ३ ॥
कीन्ह कवन पन कहहु कृपाला । सत्यधाम प्रभु दीनदयाला ॥
जदपि सतीं पूछा बहु भाँती । तदपि न कहेउ त्रिपुर आराती ॥ ४ ॥

Then Śankara bowed His head at the feet of the Lord, and as soon as He invoked Śrī Rāma the idea came to His mind that He should have no connection with Satī so long as she continued to remain in that body. Śiva resolved accordingly and having so resolved the stable-minded Lord Śankara proceeded towards His home (Mount Kailāsa) with His mind fixed on the Hero of Raghu's race. Even as He stepped forward a charming voice from heaven thundered forth: "Glory to the great Lord Śiva, who has so staunchly upheld the cause of Devotion. Who else than You can take such a vow? You are a devotee of Śrī Rāma and the all-powerful Lord at the same time." Satī felt troubled at heart when She heard the heavenly voice. She addressed Śiva in a faltering voice, "Tell me, O merciful Lord! what vow You have taken. You are an embodiment of Truth and compassionate to the poor." Even though Satī inquired in ways more than one, the Slayer of the demon Tripura, Śankara, spoke not a word.

(1—4)

दो०—सतीं हृदयँ अनुमान किय सबु जानेउ सर्बग्य ।
कीन्ह कपटु मैं संभु सन नारि सहज जड़ अग्य ॥ ५७ (क) ॥

Satī concluded that the omniscient Lord had come to know everything and felt sorry that She had tried to deceive Śambhu. The woman is silly and stupid by nature, She realized. (57 A)

सो०—जलु पय सरिस बिकाइ देखहु प्रीति कि रीति भलि ।
बिलग होइ रसु जाइ कपट खटाई परत पुनि ॥ ५७ (ख) ॥

Even water (when mixed with milk) sells as milk: look at the unifying process of love. The water, however, is separated from the milk and the taste also disappears the moment a drop of acid is introduced into it in the form of a falsehood. (57 B)

चौ०—हृदयँ सोचु समुझत निज करनी । चिंता अमित जाइ नहिं बरनी ॥
कृपासिंधु सिव परम अगाधा । प्रगट न कहेउ मोर अपराधा ॥ १ ॥
संकर रुख अवलोकि भवानी । प्रभु मोहि तजेउ हृदयँ अकुलानी ॥
निज अघ समुझि न कछु कहि जाई । तपइ अवाँ इव उर अधिकाई ॥ २ ॥
सतिहि ससोच जानि बृषकेतू । कहीं कथा सुंदर सुख हेतू ॥
बरनत पंथ बिबिध इतिहासा । बिस्वनाथ पहुँचे कैलासा ॥ ३ ॥
तहँ पुनि संभु समुझि पन आपन । बैठे बट तर करि कमलासन ॥
संकर सहज सरूपु सम्हारा । लागि समाधि अखंड अपारा ॥ ४ ॥

Satī felt perturbed in Her heart at the thought of what She had done; and the extent of Her anxiety could neither be gauged nor described. She realized that Lord Śiva is a supremely unfathomable ocean of mercy, hence He did not openly declare Her fault. From the attitude of Śankara, however, She judged that the Lord had abandoned Her, and felt disturbed in Her heart. Conscious of Her guilt She could not utter a word of protest; but all the while Her heart smouldered like a furnace. Perceiving the sad look of Satī, Śiva (who has a bull emblazoned on His standard) narrated beautiful stories in order to divert Her mind. Relating various legends while on His way, the Lord of the universe, Śiva, reached Kailāsa. Then, recalling His vow, Śambhu sat down there under a banyan tree in the Yogic pose known as Padmāsana (the pose of a lotus). Śankara communed with His own Self and passed into an unbroken and indefinitely long Samādhi (trance). (1—4)

दो०—सती बसहिं कैलास तब अधिक सोचु मन माहिं ।
मरमु न कोऊ जान कछु जुग सम दिवस सिराहिं ॥ ५८ ॥

Then Satī dwelt in Kailāsa, Her mind grievously sorrowing. Nobody knew anything about what was going on in Her mind; but the days hung heavy on Her like so many Yugas or ages. (58)

चौ०—नित नव सोचु सती उर भारा । कब जैहउँ दुख सागर पारा ॥
मैं जो कीन्ह रघुपति अपमाना । पुनि पति बचनु मृषा करि जाना ॥ १ ॥
सो फलु मोहि बिधाताँ दीन्हा । जो कछु उचित रहा सोइ कीन्हा ॥
अब बिधि अस बूझिअ नहिं तोही । संकर बिमुख जिआवसि मोही ॥ २ ॥
कहि न जाइ कछु हृदय गलानी । मन महुँ रामहि सुमिर सयानी ॥
जौं प्रभु दीनदयालु कहावा । आरति हरन बेद जसु गावा ॥ ३ ॥
तौ मैं बिनय करउँ कर जोरी । छूटउ बेगि देह यह मोरी ॥
जौं मोरें सिव चरन सनेहू । मन क्रम बचन सत्य ब्रतु एहू ॥ ४ ॥

The grief that preyed on Satī's mind was ever new; for She did not know when She would be able to cross the ocean of sorrow. "I slighted the Lord of Raghus and again took my husband's words to be untrue, Providence has repaid me for my sins and has done only that which I deserved. Now, O God, it does not behove you that you should make me survive even after alienating me from Śankara." The anguish of Her heart was beyond words. The sane lady invoked the presence of Rāma in Her heart and addressed Him thus, "If they refer to You as compassionate to the poor, and if the Vedas have glorified You as the dispeller of sorrow, I beseech with joined palms, O Lord, that I may be speedily rid of this body of mine. If I have any devotion to the feet of Śiva and if I am true to my vow in thought, word and deed,— (1—4)

दो०—तौ सबदरसी सुनिअ प्रभु करउ सो बेगि उपाइ ।
होइ मरनु जेहिं बिनहिं श्रम दुसह बिपत्ति बिहाइ ॥ ५९ ॥

"Then, O all-perceiving Lord, listen to me and speedily devise some plan whereby I may die and be thus rid of this unbearable calamity without much exertion." (59)

चौ०—एहि बिधि दुखित प्रजेसकुमारी । अकथनीय दारुन दुखु भारी ॥
बीतें संबत सहस सतासी । तजी समाधि संभु अबिनासी ॥ १ ॥
राम नाम सिव सुमिरन लागे । जानेउ सतीं जगतपति जागे ॥
जाइ संभु पद बंदनु कीन्हा । सनमुख संकर आसनु दीन्हा ॥ २ ॥
लगे कहन हरिकथा रसाला । दच्छ प्रजेस भए तेहि काला ॥
देखा बिधि बिचारि सब लायक । दच्छहि कीन्ह प्रजापति नायक ॥ ३ ॥
बड़ अधिकार दच्छ जब पावा । अति अभिमानु हृदयँ तब आवा ॥
नहिं कोउ अस जनमा जग माहीं । प्रभुता पाइ जाहि मद नाहीं ॥ ४ ॥

The daughter of Dakṣa, Satī, thus felt very miserable. Her deep agony was terrible beyond words When eighty-seven thousand years elapsed, the immortal Śambhu emerged from His trance. Śiva started repeating the name of Rāma; then Satī came to know that the Lord of the universe had come to the waking state. She went and bowed at the feet of Śambhu. Śankara gave Her a seat opposite Himself. He began to narrate the delightful stories of Śrī Hari. Meanwhile Dakṣa (Satī's father) had come to be the lord of created beings. On careful consideration the Creator (Brahmā) found Dakṣa qualified in every way and appointed him as the supreme lord of created beings. When Dakṣa attained this high position, the pride of his heart knew no bounds. Never was a creature born in this world, whom power did not intoxicate. (1—4)

दो०—दच्छ लिए मुनि बोलि सब करन लगे बड़ जाग।
नेवते सादर सकल सुर जे पावत मख भाग॥ ६०॥

Dakṣa got together all the sages and they began to perform a big sacrifice. All the gods who obtain a share of the oblations offered at a sacrifice were cordially invited to attend. (60)

चौ०—किंनर नाग सिद्ध गंधर्बा। बधुन्ह समेत चले सुर सर्बा॥
बिष्नु बिरंचि महेसु बिहाई। चले सकल सुर जान बनाई॥ १॥
सतीं बिलोके ब्योम बिमाना। जात चले सुंदर बिधि नाना॥
सुर सुंदरीं करहिं कल गाना। सुनत श्रवन छूटहिं मुनि ध्याना॥ २॥
पूछेउ तब सिवँ कहेउ बखानी। पिता जग्य सुनि कछु हरषानी॥
जौं महेसु मोहि आयसु देहीं। कछु दिन जाइ रहौं मिस एहीं॥ ३॥
पति परित्याग हृदयँ दुखु भारी। कहइ न निज अपराध बिचारी॥
बोली सती मनोहर बानी। भय संकोच प्रेम रस सानी॥ ४॥

Kinnaras (a species of demigods), Nāgas, Siddhas (a class of celestial beings) and Gandharvas (celestial songsters) and the whole host of gods proceeded to the sacrifice along with their wives. All the gods with the exception of Viṣṇu, Virañchi (the Creator) and the great Lord Śiva, set out in their aerial cars. Satī beheld beautiful aerial cars of various patterns coursing through the air. Celestial damsels were singing melodious strains, which intruded upon the ears of ascetics and broke their meditation. When Satī inquired about the stir in the air, Śiva explained the whole thing. She was somewhat delighted to hear of the sacrifice commenced by Her father and thought of making it an excuse for staying a few days with Her father in case the great Lord Śiva granted Her leave. Repudiation by Her lord tormented Her heart not a little; but conscious of Her guilt She would not utter a word. At last Satī spoke in a charming voice tinged with awe, misgiving and affection:— (1—4)

दो०—पिता भवन उत्सव परम जौं प्रभु आयसु होइ।
तौ मैं जाउँ कृपायतन सादर देखन सोइ॥ ६१॥

"There is great rejoicing at my father's house, O Lord. If You grant me leave, I would fain go and see it, O storehouse of compassion." (61)

चौ०—कहेहु नीक मोरेहुँ मन भावा। यह अनुचित नहिं नेवत पठावा॥
दच्छ सकल निज सुता बोलाईं। हमरें बयर तुम्हउ बिसराईं॥ १॥
ब्रह्मसभाँ हम सन दुखु माना। तेहि तें अजहुँ करहिं अपमाना॥
जौं बिनु बोलें जाहु भवानी। रहइ न सीलु सनेहु न कानी॥ २॥
जदपि मित्र प्रभु पितु गुर गेहा। जाइअ बिनु बोलेहुँ न सँदेहा॥
तदपि बिरोध मान जहँ कोई। तहाँ गएँ कल्यानु न होई॥ ३॥
भाँति अनेक संभु समुझावा। भावी बस न ग्यानु उर आवा॥
कह प्रभु जाहु जो बिनहिं बोलाएँ। नहिं भलि बात हमारे भाएँ॥ ४॥

Lord Śiva replied, "Your suggestion is good and has commended itself to Me as well. But the anomaly is that Your father has sent no invitation to us. Dakṣa has invited all his other daughters; but because of the grudge he bears to us you too have been ignored. In the court of Brahmā he once took offence at our behaviour; that is why he insults us even now. If you go there uninvited, Bhavānī, all decorum, affection and honour will be cast to the winds It is no doubt true one should call on one's friend, master, father or teacher without waiting for a formal invitation; yet where someone nurses a grudge against you, you reap no good by going there." Śambhu expostulated with Satī in so many ways; but as fate had willed it wisdom would not dawn on Her. The Lord repeated once more that if She went to Her father's place uninvited, He anticipated no good results from it. (1—4)

दो०—कहि देखा हर जतन बहु रहइ न दच्छकुमारि ।
दिए मुख्य गन संग तव विदा कीन्ह त्रिपुरारि ॥ ६२ ॥

Having reasoned with Her in ways more than one when Hara at last perceived that the daughter of Dakṣa was not going to stay, the Slayer of Tripura detailed a few of His principal attendants as Her escort and sent Her away. (62)

चौ०—पिता भवन जब गईं भवानी । दच्छ त्रास काहुँ न सनमानी ॥
सादर भलेहिं मिली एक माता । भगिनीं मिलीं बहुत मुसुकाता ॥ १ ॥
दच्छ न कछु पूछी कुसलाता । सतिहि बिलोकि जरे सब गाता ॥
सतीं जाइ देखेउ तब जागा । कतहुँ न दीख संभु कर भागा ॥ २ ॥
तब चित चढ़ेउ जो संकर कहेऊ । प्रभु अपमानु समुझि उर दहेऊ ॥
पाछिल दुखु न हृदयँ अस ब्यापा । जस यह भयउ महा परितापा ॥ ३ ॥
जद्यपि जग दारुन दुख नाना । सब तें कठिन जाति अवमाना ॥
समुझि सो सतिहि भयउ अति क्रोधा । बहु बिधि जननीं कीन्ह प्रबोधा ॥ ४ ॥

When Bhavānī (etymologically, the Consort of Bhava, an epithet of Śiva) reached Her father's house, no one greeted Her for fear of incurring Dakṣa's displeasure. Her mother was the solitary figure who met Her kindly. Her sisters received Her with profuse smiles. Dakṣa would not even inquire about Her health; he burnt all over with rage at the very sight of Satī. Satī then went to have a look at the sacrifice; but nowhere did She find any share of oblations set apart for Śambhu. Then did She realize the force of Śankara's warning; Her heart burnt within Her at the thought of the insult offered to Her lord. The former grief (that of repudiation by Her lord) did not torment Her heart so much as the great agony She now felt (as a result of the insult offered to Her husband). Although there are terrible agonies of various kinds in this world, the insult offered to one's own people is the most painful of them all. The thought of the same made Satī furious. Her mother tried to pacify Her in many ways. (1—4)

दो०—सिव अपमानु न जाइ सहि हृदयँ न होइ प्रबोध ।
सकल सभहि हठि हटकि तब बोलीं बचन सक्रोध ॥ ६३ ॥

The insult to Śiva was something unbearable; Her heart could not, therefore, be pacified. Then, sharply reproaching the whole assembly, She spoke in angry accents:— (63)

चौ०—सुनहु सभासद सकल मुनिंदा। कही सुनी जिन्ह संकर निंदा॥
सो फलु तुरत लहब सब काहूँ। भली भाँति पछिताब पिताहूँ॥ १॥
संत संभु श्रीपति अपबादा। सुनिअ जहाँ तहँ असि मरजादा॥
काटिअ तासु जीभ जो बसाई। श्रवन मूदि न त चलिअ पराई॥ २॥
जगदातमा महेसु पुरारी। जगत जनक सब के हितकारी॥
पिता मंदमति निंदत तेही। दच्छ सुक्र संभव यह देही॥ ३॥
तजिहउँ तुरत देह तेहि हेतू। उर धरि चंद्रमौलि बृषकेतू॥
अस कहि जोग अगिनि तनु जारा। भयउ सकल मख हाहाकारा॥ ४॥

"Hear ye elders of the assembly and all great sages! All of you who have reviled Śankara or heard Him reviled must forthwith reap the fruit of your sin and My father too shall fully repent. Wherever you hear a saint, Śambhu or Viṣṇu (the Lord of Lakṣmī) vilified, the rule is that if it lies within your power you should tear out the tongue of the reviler or you should run away closing your ears. The Slayer of Tripura, the great Lord Śiva, is the universal Spirit; He is the father of the universe and is beneficent to all. It is Him that my stupid father vilifies, and this body of Mine has sprung from the loins of Dakṣa. Therefore, installing in My heart Lord Śiva, who bears the moon on His forehead and a bull as His emblem, I shall immediately quit this body." As She spoke thus She burnt Her body with the fire of Yoga.* A plaintive cry rose from the whole assembly. (1—4)

दो०—सती मरनु सुनि संभु गन लगे करन मख खीस।
जग्य बिधंस बिलोकि भृगु रच्छा कीन्हि मुनीस॥ ६४॥

Hearing of Satī's death, the attendants of Śambhu began to destroy the sacrifice. Seeing the sacrifice being destroyed, the great sage Bhṛgu protected it (64)

चौ०—समाचार सब संकर पाए। बीरभद्रु करि कोप पठाए॥
जग्य बिधंस जाइ तिन्ह कीन्हा। सकल सुरन्ह बिधिवत फलु दीन्हा॥ १॥
भै जगबिदित दच्छ गति सोई। जसि कछु संभु बिमुख कै होई॥
यह इतिहास सकल जग जानी। ताते मैं संछेप बखानी॥ २॥
सतीं मरत हरि सन बरु मागा। जनम जनम सिव पद अनुरागा॥
तेहि कारन हिमगिरि गृह जाई। जनमीं पारबती तनु पाई॥ ३॥
जब तें उमा सैल गृह जाईं। सकल सिद्धि संपति तहँ छाईं॥
जहँ तहँ मुनिन्ह सुआश्रम कीन्हे। उचित बास हिमभूधर दीन्हे॥ ४॥

Śankara got all the news and in His wrath He sent Vīrabhadra. Going there the latter made havoc of the sacrifice and requited all the gods according to their deserts. As is well-known to the world, Dakṣa met the same fate which an opponent of Śambhu generally meets. The story is known

* Fire produced by Yogis through the friction of the vital airs within the body.

throughout the world. that is why I have told it in brief While dying, Satī asked a boon of Śrī Hari that She might remain devoted to the feet of Śiva in all successive births. That is why She was reborn as Pārvatī (*lit.* daughter of a mountain) in the house of Himāchala (the deity presiding over the Himālaya mountain). Ever since Umā was born in the house of Himālaya the mountain became an abode of all blessings and prosperity. Sages built beautiful hermitages here and there and Himālaya assigned them suitable abodes (in the form of caves etc.).

(1—4)

दो०—सदा सुमन फल सहित सब द्रुम नव नाना जाति।
प्रगटीं सुंदर सैल पर मनि आकर बहु भाँति ॥ ६५ ॥

Young trees of different varieties were endowed with never-failing blossoms and fruits, and mines of jewels of various kinds appeared on the beautiful mountain. (65)

चौ०—सरिता सब पुनीत जलु बहहीं। खग मृग मधुप सुखी सब रहहीं ॥
सहज बयरु सब जीवन्ह त्यागा। गिरि पर सकल करहिं अनुरागा ॥ १ ॥
सोह सैल गिरिजा गृह आएँ। जिमि जनु रामभगति के पाएँ ॥
नित नूतन मंगल गृह तासू। ब्रह्मादिक गावहिं जसु जासू ॥ २ ॥
नारद समाचार सब पाए। कौतुकहीं गिरि गेह सिधाए ॥
सैलराज बड़ आदर कीन्हा। पद पखारि बर आसनु दीन्हा ॥ ३ ॥
नारि सहित मुनि पद सिरु नावा। चरन सलिल सबु भवनु सिंचावा ॥
निज सौभाग्य बहुत गिरि बरना। सुता बोलि मेली मुनि चरना ॥ ४ ॥

All the rivers bore holy waters; birds, beasts and bees, all rejoiced. All animals gave up their natural antipathies and all those who dwelt on the mountain loved one another. With the advent of Girijā (a synonym of Pārvatī) the mountain (Himālaya) wore a cheerful look even as devotion to Śrī Rāma lights up the face of a devotee Every day brought a new delight to the house of Himāchala, whose glory was sung even by great gods like Brahmā (the Creator). Receiving all the news Nārada eagerly went to the house of Himāchala The king of mountains (the presiding deity of the Himālayas), received him with great honour, washing the sage's feet he led him to a beautiful seat. He bowed his head at the sage's feet along with his wife and had his whole mansion sprinkled with the water hallowed by his feet. Himāchala extolled his own good luck and, summoning his daughter, placed her at the sage's feet.

(1—4)

दो०—त्रिकालग्य सर्बग्य तुम्ह गति सर्बत्र तुम्हारि।
कहहु सुता के दोष गुन मुनिबर हृदयँ बिचारि ॥ ६६ ॥

"You know everything, including the past, present and future, and have access everywhere. Therefore, O good sage, tell me what is good and what is bad about my daughter after a mature consideration."

(66)

चौ०—कह मुनि बिहसि गूढ़ मृदु बानी । सुता तुम्हारि सकल गुन खानी ॥
सुंदर सहज सुसील सयानी । नाम उमा अंबिका भवानी ॥ १ ॥
सब लच्छन संपन्न कुमारी । होइहि संतत पियहि पिआरी ॥
सदा अचल एहि कर अहिवाता । एहि तें जसु पैहहिं पितु माता ॥ २ ॥
होइहि पूज्य सकल जग माहीं । एहि सेवत कछु दुर्लभ नाहीं ॥
एहि कर नामु सुमिरि संसारा । त्रिय चढ़िहहिं पतिब्रत असिधारा ॥ ३ ॥
सैल सुलच्छन सुता तुम्हारी । सुनहु जे अब अवगुन दुइ चारी ॥
अगुन अमान मातु पितु हीना । उदासीन सब संसय छीना ॥ ४ ॥

The sage smilingly replied in the following soft yet significant words: "Your daughter is a mine of all virtues—pretty, amiable and intelligent by nature. She will be called Umā, Ambikā (*lit.*, mother) and Bhavānī Adorned with all good traits, the girl shall win the unfailing love of her husband. She shall remain ever united with her lord and bring glory to her parents. She shall command the respect of the whole universe; he who waits upon her shall lack nothing. By the mere thought of her name women in this world shall be enabled to tread the path of fidelity to their lord, which is sharp as the edge of a sword. Your daughter, O Himālaya, is endowed with auspicious marks. Hear now the few drawbacks she possesses. Devoid of merits, free from pride, without father or mother, unconcerned and free from doubts,—(1—4)

दो०—जोगी जटिल अकाम मन नगन अमंगल बेष ।
अस स्वामी एहि कहँ मिलिहि परी हस्त असि रेख ॥ ६७ ॥

"An ascetic with matted hair and a heart devoid of longing, stark naked and with hideous accoutrements—such a one shall be her lord, as I can read from the lines on her palm." (67)

चौ०—सुनि मुनि गिरा सत्य जियँ जानी । दुख दंपतिहि उमा हरषानी ॥
नारदहूँ यह भेदु न जाना । दसा एक समुझब बिलगाना ॥ १ ॥
सकल सखीं गिरिजा गिरि मैना । पुलक सरीर भरे जल नैना ॥
होइ न मृषा देवरिषि भाषा । उमा सो बचनु हृदयँ धरि राखा ॥ २ ॥
उपजेउ सिव पद कमल सनेहू । मिलन कठिन मन भा संदेहू ॥
जानि कुअवसरु प्रीति दुराई । सखी उछँग बैठी पुनि जाई ॥ ३ ॥
झूठि न होइ देवरिषि बानी । सोचहिं दंपति सखीं सयानी ॥
उर धरि धीर कहइ गिरिराऊ । कहहु नाथ का करिअ उपाऊ ॥ ४ ॥

Hearing the words of the sage and believing them to be true, Himālaya and his wife became disconsolate; while Umā felt delighted. Even Nārada could not perceive this difference. Even though their outer expression was the same, their feeling was different. Girijā and all her playmates, Himālaya and his wife, Menā, all had their hair standing on their end and their eyes were full of tears. The words of the celestial sage Nārada could not be untrue: Umā cherished them in her heart. Love for the lotus feet of Śiva sprouted in her heart. She, however, felt diffident in her mind: union with Śiva

appeared so difficult to her. Finding the time inopportune for its disclosure, she concealed her emotion and then sat down in the lap of one of her playmates. The prediction of the sage could not be false: the thought made Himavān and his wife as well as the senior playmates anxious. Collecting himself, the lord of mountains said, "Tell me, holy sir, what remedy should now be employed ?" (1—4)

दो०—कह मुनीस हिमवंत सुनु जो बिधि लिखा लिलार ।
देव दनुज नर नाग मुनि कोउ न मेटनिहार ॥ ६८ ॥

The chief of sages, Nārada, replied: "Hear, O Himavān; whatever has been decreed by Fate no one can undo,—not even gods, demons, human beings, Nāgas or sages. (68)

चौ०—तदपि एक मैं कहउँ उपाई । होइ करै जौं दैउ सहाई ॥
जस बरु मैं बरनेउँ तुम्ह पाहीं । मिलिहि उमहि तस संसय नाहीं ॥ १ ॥
जे जे बर के दोष बखाने । ते सब सिव पहिं मैं अनुमाने ॥
जौं बिबाहु संकर सन होई । दोषउ गुन सम कह सबु कोई ॥ २ ॥
जौं अहि सेज सयन हरि करहीं । बुध कछु तिन्ह कर दोषु न धरहीं ॥
भानु कृसानु सर्ब रस खाहीं । तिन्ह कहँ मंद कहत कोउ नाहीं ॥ ३ ॥
सुभ अरु असुभ सलिल सब बहई । सुरसरि कोउ अपुनीत न कहई ॥
समरथ कहुँ नहिं दोषु गोसाईं । रबि पावक सुरसरि की नाईं ॥ ४ ॥

"Nevertheless I tell you one remedy: this may avail if heaven helps you. Umā will undoubtedly get such a husband as I have described to you. But whatever demerits I have shown in her bridegroom exist in Śiva so far as I can guess. If her marriage takes place with Śankara, everyone will call the demerits as good as virtues. Even though Śrī Hari uses the serpent-god Śeṣa as His couch and sleeps thereon, the wise do not blame Him for the same. Even so the sun and fire absorb moisture in all forms, but no one calls them names. Again, water of every description, pure as well as impure, flows into the Gaṅgā; yet no one calls the heavenly stream impure. Even like the sun, fire and the Gaṅgā, the mighty incur no blame. (1—4)

दो०—जौं अस हिसिषा करहिं नर जड़ बिबेक अभिमान ।
परहिं कलप भरि नरक महुँ जीव कि ईस समान ॥ ६९ ॥

"If in their pride of wisdom foolish men emulate the great, they are cast into hell for a whole Kalpa or life-time of the universe. Can an embodied soul vie with God ? (69)

चौ०—सुरसरि जल कृत बारुनि जाना । कबहुँ न संत करहिं तेहि पाना ॥
सुरसरि मिलें सो पावन जैसें । ईस अनीसहि अंतरु तैसें ॥ १ ॥
संभु सहज समरथ भगवाना । एहि बिबाहँ सब बिधि कल्याना ॥
दुराराध्य पै अहहिं महेसू । आसुतोष पुनि किएँ कलेसू ॥ २ ॥

जौं तपु करै कुमारि तुम्हारी । भाविउ मेटि सकहिं त्रिपुरारी ॥
जद्यपि बर अनेक जग माहीं । एहि कहँ सिव तजि दूसर नाहीं ॥ ३ ॥
बर दायक प्रनतारति भंजन । कृपासिंधु सेवक मन रंजन ॥
इच्छित फल बिनु सिव अवराधें । लहिअ न कोटि जोग जप साधें ॥ ४ ॥

"Holy men would never drink wine even if they came to know that it had been made of water from the Gangā, but the same wine becomes pure when it is poured into the Gangā. The difference between an individual soul and God should be similarly explained. Śambhu is all-powerful by nature, for He is no other than God Himself. Hence matrimony with Him will prove auspicious in every way. The great Lord Śiva is certainly difficult to propitiate; but He is quickly pleased when penance is undergone. If your daughter practises austerity, the Slayer of the demon Tripura, Śiva, can even erase the lines of Fate. Even though there may be many a suitor in the world, there is no match for her except Śiva. He is the bestower of boons, the dispeller of the agony of the suppliant, an ocean of benevolence and the delight of His devotee. Without propitiating Śiva the object of one's desire cannot be attained through millions of Yogic practices and Japa (repetitions of a mystic formula)." (1—4)

दो०—अस कहि नारद सुमिरि हरि गिरिजहि दीन्हि असीस ।
होइहि यह कल्यान अब संसय तजहु गिरीस ॥ ७० ॥

So saying and with his thoughts fixed on Śrī Hari, Nārada gave his blessings to Girijā and said, "Shed all fear, O lord of mountains; all will now turn out well." (70)

चौ०—कहि अस ब्रह्मभवन मुनि गयऊ । आगिल चरित सुनहु जस भयऊ ॥
पतिहि एकांत पाइ कह मैना । नाथ न मैं समुझे मुनि बैना ॥ १ ॥
जौं घरु बरु कुलु होइ अनूपा । करिअ बिबाहु सुता अनुरूपा ॥
न त कन्या बरु रहउ कुआरी । कंत उमा मम प्रानपिआरी ॥ २ ॥
जौं न मिलिहि बरु गिरिजहि जोगू । गिरि जड़ सहज कहिहि सबु लोगू ॥
सोइ बिचारि पति करेहु बिबाहू । जेहिं न बहोरि होइ उर दाहू ॥ ३ ॥
अस कहि परी चरन धरि सीसा । बोले सहित सनेह गिरीसा ॥
बरु पावक प्रगटै ससि माहीं । नारद बचनु अन्यथा नाहीं ॥ ४ ॥

Having spoken thus, the sage returned to the abode of Brahmā (the Creator). Now hear the end of the story how it came about. Finding her husband alone, Menā (Himālaya's wife) said to him, "My lord, I could not follow the words of the sage. If the match, his house and his pedigree are without parallel and worthy of our daughter, the marriage may be concluded. If not, the girl had better remain unmarried; for, my lord, Umā is dear to me as my own life. If we fail to secure a match worthy of Girijā, everyone will say Himālaya is dull by nature. Keep this in mind, my lord, while concluding an alliance, so that there may be no cause for repentance." Having spoken these words Menā laid herself prostrate with her head at the feet of her lord. The lord of mountains, Himālaya, replied in endearing terms, "Sooner shall the moon emit flames of fire than the prophecy of Nārada should prove untrue. (1—4)

दो०—प्रिया सोचु परिहरहु सबु सुमिरहु श्रीभगवान ।
पारबतिहि निरमयउ जेहिं सोइ करिहि कल्यान ॥ ७१ ॥

"Put away all anxiety, my dear, and fix your thoughts on the Lord. He alone who has created Pārvatī will bring her happiness." (71)

चौ०—अब जौं तुम्हहि सुता पर नेहू । तौ अस जाइ सिखावनु देहू ॥
करै सो तपु जेहिं मिलहिं महेसू । आन उपायँ न मिटिहि कलेसू ॥ १ ॥
नारद बचन सगर्भ सहेतू । सुंदर सब गुन निधि बृषकेतू ॥
अस बिचारि तुम्ह तजहु असंका । सबहि भाँति संकरु अकलंका ॥ २ ॥
सुनि पति बचन हरषि मन माहीं । गई तुरत उठि गिरिजा पाहीं ॥
उमहि बिलोकि नयन भरे बारी । सहित सनेह गोद बैठारी ॥ ३ ॥
बारहिं बार लेति उर लाई । गदगद कंठ न कछु कहि जाई ॥
जगत मातु सर्बग्य भवानी । मातु सुखद बोलीं मृदु बानी ॥ ४ ॥

"Now if you cherish any love for your child, then go and admonish her that she should practise austerity which may bring about her union with Śiva: there is no other way of overcoming sorrow. The words of Nārada are pregnant and full of reason. Śiva (who bears a bull for His emblem) is handsome and a mine of all virtues: recognizing this truth do not entertain any misgiving. Śankara is irreproachable in every way." Hearing the above words of her husband Menā felt delighted at heart; she at once rose and went where Girijā was. At the sight of Umā tears rushed to her eyes and she affectionately took the girl in her lap. Again and again she hugged the child, her voice was choked with emotion and she found herself tongue-tied. The Mother of the universe, the all-knowing Bhavānī, then spoke the following soft words, which brought delight to her mother.— (1—4)

दो०—सुनहि मातु मैं दीख अस सपन सुनावउँ तोहि ।
सुंदर गौर सुबिप्रबर अस उपदेसेउ मोहि ॥ ७२ ॥

"Listen, mother; I relate to you a vision which I saw. A handsome and fair-complexioned noble Brahman gave me the following exhortation. (72)

चौ०—करहि जाइ तपु सैलकुमारी । नारद कहा सो सत्य बिचारी ॥
मातु पितहि पुनि यह मत भावा । तपु सुखप्रद दुख दोष नसावा ॥ १ ॥
तपबल रचइ प्रपंचु बिधाता । तपबल बिष्नु सकल जग त्राता ॥
तपबल संभु करहिं संघारा । तपबल सेषु धरइ महि भारा ॥ २ ॥
तप अधार सब सृष्टि भवानी । करहि जाइ तपु अस जियँ जानी ॥
सुनत बचन बिसमित महतारी । सपन सुनायउ गिरिहि हँकारी ॥ ३ ॥
मातु पितहि बहुबिधि समुझाई । चलीं उमा तप हित हरषाई ॥
प्रिय परिवार पिता अरु माता । भए बिकल मुख आव न बाता ॥ ४ ॥

"Recognizing the truth of Nārada's words go and practise austerity, O mountain-maid; the idea has commended itself to your father and mother as well. Austerity is conducive to joy and puts an end to sorrow and evils. By virtue of penance the Creator creates the universe. By virtue of penance Viṣṇu protects the whole world. By virtue of penance Sambhu brings about dissolution. By virtue of penance, again, Śeṣa (the serpent-god) bears the burden of the earth on his head. In fact, the entire creation rests on penance, Bhavānī. Bearing this in mind, go and practise austerity." Hearing these words the mother was filled with wonder. She sent for Himālaya and communicated the vision to him. Consoling her parents in many ways Umā set out for penance in a joyous mood. Her loving household and parents felt miserable and none could speak a word. (1—4)

दो०—बेदसिरा मुनि आइ तब सबहि कहा समुझाइ ।
पारबती महिमा सुनत रहे प्रबोधहि पाइ ॥ ७३ ॥

The sage Vedaśirā then came and consoled them all. They were comforted when they heard of the glory of Pārvatī. (73)

चौ०—उर धरि उमा प्रानपति चरना । जाइ बिपिन लागीं तपु करना ॥
अति सुकुमार न तनु तप जोगू । पति पद सुमिरि तजेउ सबु भोगू ॥ १ ॥
नित नव चरन उपज अनुरागा । बिसरी देह तपहिं मनु लागा ॥
संबत सहस मूल फल खाए । सागु खाइ सत बरष गवाँए ॥ २ ॥
कछु दिन भोजनु बारि बतासा । किए कठिन कछु दिन उपबासा ॥
बेल पाती महि परइ सुखाई । तीनि सहस संबत सोइ खाई ॥ ३ ॥
पुनि परिहरे सुखानेउ परना । उमहि नामु तब भयउ अपरना ॥
देखि उमहि तप खीन सरीरा । ब्रह्मगिरा भै गगन गभीरा ॥ ४ ॥

Cherishing in her heart the feet of her dear lord, Umā went to the forest and began her penance. Her delicate frame was little fit for austerities; yet she renounced all luxuries fixing her mind on the feet of her lord. Her devotion to the feet of her lord presented a new phase every day; and she got so absorbed in penance that she lost all consciousness of her body. For a thousand years she lived on roots and fruits alone; while for another hundred years she subsisted on vegetables. For some days her only sustenance was water and air; while for a few days she observed a rigorous fast. For three thousand years she maintained herself on the withered leaves of the *Bel** tree that dropped on the ground. Finally she gave up even dry leaves; Umā then came to be known by the name of Aparṇā (living without leaves). Seeing her body emaciated through self-mortification the deep voice of Brahmā (the Creator) resounded through the heavens:— (1—4)

दो०—भयउ मनोरथ सुफल तव सुनु गिरिराजकुमारि ।
परिहरु दुसह कलेस सब अब मिलिहहिं त्रिपुरारि ॥ ७४ ॥

"Listen, O daughter of the mountain-king; your desire is accomplished. Cease all your rigorous penance; the Slayer of Tripura will soon be yours. (74)

* The *Bel* tree (*Aegle Marmelos*) is specially sacred to Śiva.

चौ०—अस तपु काहुँ न कीन्ह भवानी । भए अनेक धीर मुनि ग्यानी ॥
अब उर धरहु ब्रह्म बर बानी । सत्य सदा संतत सुचि जानी ॥ १ ॥
आवै पिता बोलावन जबहीं । हठ परिहरि घर जाएहु तबहीं ॥
मिलहिं तुम्हहि जब सप्त रिषीसा । जानेहु तब प्रमान बागीसा ॥ २ ॥
सुनत गिरा बिधि गगन बखानी । पुलक गात गिरिजा हरषानी ॥
उमा चरित सुंदर मैं गावा । सुनहु संभु कर चरित सुहावा ॥ ३ ॥
जब तें सतीं जाइ तनु त्यागा । तब तें सिव मन भयउ बिरागा ॥
जपहिं सदा रघुनायक नामा । जहँ तहँ सुनहिं राम गुन ग्रामा ॥ ४ ॥

"There have been many self-possessed and illumined sages; but not one of them, Bhavānī, performed such penance as this. Now cherish in your heart this supreme utterance from heaven, knowing it to be invariably true and ever sacred When your father comes to call you, give up all resistance and return home at once. Again, when the seven sages meet you, be assured of the veracity of this oracle." Girijā (the daughter of Himavān) rejoiced to hear this utterance of Brahmā echoed by heaven, and a thrill ran through her limbs. [Yājñavalkya says to Bharadwāja,] I have thus sung the beautiful story of Umā, now hear the charming account of Śambhu. Ever since Satī went and quitted her body, Śiva's mind recoiled from everything. He ever repeated the name of the Lord of Raghus and heard the recitation of Śrī Rāma's glories here and there. (1—4)

दो०—चिदानंद सुखधाम सिव बिगत मोह मद काम ।
बिचरहिं महि धरि हृदयँ हरि सकल लोक अभिराम ॥ ७५ ॥

The embodiment of intelligence and bliss, the abode of happiness, Śiva, who is ever free from error, arrogance and desire, roamed about on earth with His heart fixed on Śrī Hari, the delight of the whole world. (75)

चौ०—कतहुँ मुनिन्ह उपदेसहिं ग्याना । कतहुँ राम गुन करहिं बखाना ॥
जदपि अकाम तदपि भगवाना । भगत बिरह दुख दुखित सुजाना ॥ १ ॥
एहि बिधि गयउ कालु बहु बीती । नित नै होइ राम पद प्रीती ॥
नेमु प्रेमु संकर कर देखा । अबिचल हृदयँ भगति कै रेखा ॥ २ ॥
प्रगटे रामु कृतग्य कृपाला । रूप सील निधि तेज बिसाला ॥
बहु प्रकार संकरहि सराहा । तुम्ह बिनु अस ब्रतु को निरबाहा ॥ ३ ॥
बहु बिधि राम सिवहि समुझावा । पारबती कर जन्मु सुनावा ॥
अति पुनीत गिरिजा कै करनी । बिस्तर सहित कृपानिधि बरनी ॥ ४ ॥

Here He instructed the sages in wisdom and there He extolled the virtues of Śrī Rāma. Though passionless and all-wise, the Lord was smitten with the pangs of separation from His devotee (Satī). In this way a considerable time elapsed. Devotion to the feet of Śrī Rāma was ever budding in His heart. When Śrī Rāma saw the self-discipline and affection of Śankara and the indelible stamp of devotion on His heart, the merciful Lord, who fully recognizes services rendered to Him, and is a mine of beauty and amiability

and an embodiment of great splendour, appeared before Śankara and extolled Him in ways more than one. "Who else than You can accomplish such a vow?" He said. Śrī Rāma admonished Him in many ways and told Him of the birth of Pārvatī. The Lord in His infinite compassion narrated at full length the most pious doings of Girijā. (1—4)

दो०—अब बिनती मम सुनहु सिव जौं मोपर निज नेहु ।
जाइ बिबाहहु सैलजहि यह मोहि मागें देहु ॥ ७६ ॥

"Now, Śiva, if You have any affection for Me, listen to My appeal. Go and marry Śailajā (the daughter of Himāchala): grant this boon to Me." (76)

चौ०—कह सिव जदपि उचित अस नाहीं । नाथ बचन पुनि मेटि न जाहीं ॥
सिर धरि आयसु करिअ तुम्हारा । परम धरमु यह नाथ हमारा ॥ १ ॥
मातु पिता गुर प्रभु कै बानी । बिनहिं बिचार करिअ सुभ जानी ॥
तुम्ह सब भाँति परम हितकारी । अग्या सिर पर नाथ तुम्हारी ॥ २ ॥
प्रभु तोषेउ सुनि संकर बचना । भक्ति बिबेक धर्म जुत रचना ॥
कह प्रभु हर तुम्हार पन रहेऊ । अब उर राखेहु जो हम कहेऊ ॥ ३ ॥
अंतरधान भए अस भाषी । संकर सोइ मूरति उर राखी ॥
तबहिं सप्तरिषि सिव पहिं आए । बोले प्रभु अति बचन सुहाए ॥ ४ ॥

Śiva replied, "Although this is hardly justifiable, the words of a master cannot be set aside at the same time. My lord, your command must be respectfully carried out: this is my paramount duty. The words of one's parents, teacher and master must be unquestionably obeyed as conducive to bliss. You are my supreme benefactor in every way; therefore, my lord, I bow to Your commands." The Lord was pleased to hear the well-chosen words of Śankara, which were inspired with devotion, wisdom and piety. The Lord said, "Your vow has been kept; now bear in mind what I have told You." Saying so He went out of sight. Śankara cherished the impression of the vision in His heart. That very moment the seven sages called on Śiva. The Lord spoke to them in most charming accents — (1—4)

दो०—पारबती पहिं जाइ तुम्ह प्रेम परिच्छा लेहु ।
गिरिहि प्रेरि पठएहु भवन दूरि करेहु संदेहु ॥ ७७ ॥

"Going to Pārvatī, you put her love to the test. Then directing her father, Himālaya, to her, send her back to her home and dispel her doubts." (77)

चौ०—रिषिन्ह गौरि देखी तहँ कैसी । मूरतिमंत तपस्या जैसी ॥
बोले मुनि सुनु सैलकुमारी । करहु कवन कारन तपु भारी ॥ १ ॥
केहि अवराधहु का तुम्ह चहहू । हम सन सत्य मरमु किन कहहू ॥
कहत बचन मनु अति सकुचाई । हँसिहहु सुनि हमारि जड़ताई ॥ २ ॥
मनु हठ परा न सुनइ सिखावा । चहत बारि पर भीति उठावा ॥
नारद कहा सत्य सोइ जाना । बिनु पंखन्ह हम चहहिं उड़ाना ॥ ३ ॥
देखहु मुनि अबिबेकु हमारा । चाहिअ सदा सिवहि भरतारा ॥ ४ ॥

There the seers saw Gaurī (a name of Pārvatī; *lit.*, fair-complexioned) as if she were penance itself personified. The sages said, "Hear, O daughter of Himāchala: why are you practising such rigorous penance? Whom do you worship, and what do you seek? Why not confide to us the real secret?" "I feel very shy in making my submission. You will be amused to hear of my folly. Yet my mind has taken a rigid attitude and heeds no advice; it would raise a wall on water. Relying on the truth of Nārada's prophecy, I long to fly even without wings. Look at my madness: I always covet Śiva as my husband." (1—4)

दो०—सुनत बचन बिहसे रिषय गिरिसंभव तव देह।
नारद कर उपदेसु सुनि कहहु बसेउ किसु गेह ॥ ७८ ॥

Hearing the above reply the sages laughed and said, "After all your body owes its existence to a mountain (Himālaya); tell us who has ever listened to Nārada's advice and lived in his home. (78)

चौ०—दच्छसुतन्ह उपदेसेन्हि जाई। तिन्ह फिरि भवनु न देखा आई ॥
चित्रकेतु कर घरु उन घाला। कनककसिपु कर पुनि अस हाला ॥ १ ॥
नारद सिख जे सुनहिं नर नारी। अवसि होहिं तजि भवनु भिखारी ॥
मन कपटी तन सज्जन चीन्हा। आपु सरिस सबही चह कीन्हा ॥ २ ॥
तेहि कें बचन मानि बिस्वासा। तुम्ह चाहहु पति सहज उदासा ॥
निर्गुन निलज कुबेष कपाली। अकुल अगेह दिगंबर ब्याली ॥ ३ ॥
कहहु कवन सुखु अस बरु पाएँ। भल भूलिहु ठग के बौराएँ ॥
पंच कहें सिवँ सती बिबाही। पुनि अवडेरि मराएन्हि ताही ॥ ४ ॥

"He called on and admonished the sons of Dakṣa and they never saw their home again. It was he who ruined the home of Chitraketu, and again Hiraṇyakaśipu (the father of Prahlāda) met a similar fate. Men and women who listen to Nārada's advice are sure to leave their home and become mendicants. Guileful at heart, he bears on his person the marks of a pious man; he would make everyone just like himself. Relying on his words you crave for a husband who is apathetic by nature, devoid of attributes, shameless, homeless and naked, who has an inauspicious look about him, wears a string of skulls around his neck, is without a family and has serpents for his ornaments. Tell us, what happiness do you expect by obtaining such a husband? You have fallen an easy prey to the machinations of that imposter! Śiva married Satī at the intercession of some friends; but later on he abandoned her and left her to die. (1—4)

दो०—अब सुख सोवत सोचु नहिं भीख मागि भव खाहिं।
सहज एकाकिन्ह के भवन कबहुँ कि नारि खटाहिं ॥ ७९ ॥

"Śiva is care-free now; he lives on alms and enjoys a sound sleep. Can women ever stay in the house of habitual recluses? (79)

चौ०—अजहूँ मानहु कहा हमारा । हम तुम्ह कहुँ बरु नीक बिचारा ॥
अति सुंदर सुचि सुखद सुसीला । गावहिं बेद जासु जस लीला ॥ १ ॥
दूषन रहित सकल गुन रासी । श्रीपति पुर बैकुंठ निवासी ॥
अस बरु तुम्हहि मिलाउब आनी । सुनत बिहसि कह बचन भवानी ॥ २ ॥
सत्य कहेहु गिरिभव तनु एहा । हठ न छूट छूटै बरु देहा ॥
कनकउ पुनि पषान तें होई । जारेहुँ सहजु न परिहर सोई ॥ ३ ॥
नारद बचन न मैं परिहरऊँ । बसउ भवनु उजरउ नहिं डरऊँ ॥
गुर कें बचन प्रतीति न जेही । सपनेहुँ सुगम न सुख सिधि तेही ॥ ४ ॥

"Even now accept our advice, we have thought of an excellent match for you—exceptionally good-looking, pious, agreeable and amiable, whose glory and exploits are sung by the Vedas. He is free from blemish, is a mine of all virtues and the lord of Lakṣmī (the goddess of prosperity) and has His abode in Vaikuṇṭha. Such a suitor we shall unite with you." Hearing this, Bhavānī laughed and said, "You have rightly observed that this body of mine is begotten of a rock: I would sooner die than give up my tenacity. Gold is another product of rock which does not abandon its character even on being consigned to fire. I may not ignore Nārada's advice; whether my house is full or desolate, I fear not. He who has no faith in the words of his preceptor cannot easily attain either happiness or success even in a dream.

(1—4)

दो०—महादेव अवगुन भवन बिष्नु सकल गुन धाम ।
जेहि कर मनु रम जाहि सन तेहि तेही सन काम ॥ ८० ॥

"The great god Śiva may be full of faults and Viṣṇu may be a repository of all virtues. One is, however, concerned with him alone who gladdens one's heart.

(80)

चौ०—जौं तुम्ह मिलतेहु प्रथम मुनीसा । सुनतिउँ सिख तुम्हारि धरि सीसा ॥
अब मैं जन्मु संभु हित हारा । को गुन दूषन करै बिचारा ॥ १ ॥
जौं तुम्हरे हठ हृदयँ बिसेषी । रहि न जाइ बिनु किएँ बरेषी ॥
तौ कौतुकिअन्ह आलसु नाहीं । बर कन्या अनेक जग माहीं ॥ २ ॥
जन्म कोटि लगि रगर हमारी । बरउँ संभु न त रहउँ कुआरी ॥
तजउँ न नारद कर उपदेसू । आपु कहहिं सत बार महेसू ॥ ३ ॥
मैं पा परउँ कहइ जगदंबा । तुम्ह गृह गवनहु भयउ बिलंबा ॥
देखि प्रेमु बोले मुनि ग्यानी । जय जय जगदंबिके भवानी ॥ ४ ॥

"Had you met me earlier, O great sages! I would have listened to your advice with reverence. But now that I have staked my life for Śambhu, who will weigh His merits and demerits? If you are specially bent upon uniting a pair and cannot help negotiating a match, there is no dearth of suitors and maidens; and those who take delight in such games know no weariness. As for myself I must wed Śambhu or remain a virgin, no matter if I have to continue

the struggle for ten million lives. I will not disregard Nārada's admonition even if Śambhu Himself tells me a hundred times to do so" "I fall at your feet," continued Pārvatī, the Mother of the universe, "please return to your home. It is already late." Seeing Pārvatī's devotion the enlightened sages exclaimed, "Glory, all glory to You, O Bhavānī, Mother of the universe' (1—4)

दो०—तुम्ह माया भगवान सिव सकल जगत पितु मातु ।
नाइ चरन सिर मुनि चले पुनि पुनि हरषत गातु ॥ ८१ ॥

"You are Māyā, while Śiva is God Himself; You are the parents of the whole universe." Bowing their head at the feet of Pārvatī, they departed. A thrill ran through their frame again and again. (81)

चौ०—जाइ मुनिन्ह हिमवंतु पठाए । करि बिनती गिरजहिं गृह ल्याए ॥
बहुरि सप्तरिषि सिव पहिं जाई । कथा उमा कै सकल सुनाई ॥ १ ॥
भए मगन सिव सुनत सनेहा । हरषि सप्तरिषि गवने गेहा ॥
मनु थिर करि तब संभु सुजाना । लगे करन रघुनायक ध्याना ॥ २ ॥
तारकु असुर भयउ तेहि काला । भुज प्रताप बल तेज बिसाला ॥
तेहिं सब लोक लोकपति जीते । भए देव सुख संपति रीते ॥ ३ ॥
अजर अमर सो जीति न जाई । हारे सुर करि बिबिध लराई ॥
तब बिरंचि सन जाइ पुकारे । देखे बिधि सब देव दुखारे ॥ ४ ॥

The sages went and despatched Himavān to Girijā and he with many entreaties brought her home. The seven seers then called on Śiva and told Him the whole history of Umā. Śiva was enraptured to hear of her love, and the Saptarṣis gladly went home. The all-wise Śambhu then concentrated His mind and began to meditate on the Lord of Raghus. A demon, Tāraka by name, flourished in those days; his strength of arm, glory and majesty were great indeed. He conquered all the spheres as well as the guardians of those spheres; all the gods were robbed of their happiness and prosperity. Knowing neither age nor death, he was invincible. The gods fought many a battle with him and lost them. They then went to Virañchi (Brahmā) and told him their grievances. The Creator found all the gods miserable. (1—4)

दो०—सब सन कहा बुझाइ बिधि दनुज निधन तब होइ ।
संभु सुक्र संभूत सुत एहि जीतइ रन सोइ ॥ ८२ ॥

Brahmā reassured them all saying, "The demon shall die only when there is a son sprung from the loins of Śambhu; for he alone can subdue the demon in battle. (82)

चौ०—मोर कहा सुनि करहु उपाई । होइहि ईस्वर करिहि सहाई ॥
सतीं जो तजी दच्छ मख देहा । जनमी जाइ हिमाचल गेहा ॥ १ ॥
तेहिं तपु कीन्ह संभु पति लागी । सिव समाधि बैठे सबु त्यागी ॥
जदपि अहइ असमंजस भारी । तदपि बात एक सुनहु हमारी ॥ २ ॥
पठवहु कामु जाइ सिव पाहीं । करै छोभु संकर मन माहीं ॥
तब हम जाइ सिवहि सिर नाई । करवाउब बिबाहु बरिआई ॥ ३ ॥

एहि बिधि भलेहिं देव हित होई । मत अति नीक कहइ सबु कोई ॥
अस्तुति सुरन्ह कीन्हि अति हेतू । प्रगटेउ बिषमबान झषकेतू ॥ ४ ॥

"Hearing what I say, act accordingly; God will help you and the plan will succeed. Satī, who left her body at the sacrifice performed by Dakṣa, has been born again in the house of Himāchala. She has undergone penance for winning the hand of Śambhu; while Śiva has renounced everything and sits absorbed in contemplation. Although it is most unseemly, yet hear one proposal of mine. Approaching Cupid (the god of love), send him to Śiva; and let him disturb the serenity of Śankara's mind. Then we shall go and bow our head at Śiva's feet and prevail on Him to marry even against His will. In this way alone may the interests of the gods be served." "The idea is excellent," everyone said. The gods then prayed with great devotion and the god of love, armed with five* arrows and having a fish emblazoned on his standard, appeared on the scene. (1—4)

दो०—सुरन्ह कही निज बिपति सब सुनि मन कीन्ह बिचार ।
संभु बिरोध न कुसल मोहि बिहसि कहेउ अस मार ॥ ८३ ॥

The gods told him all their distress; hearing their tale, the god of love pondered and spoke thus with a smile, "I expect no good results for myself from hostility to Śambhu. (83)

चौ०—तदपि करब मैं काजु तुम्हारा । श्रुति कह परम धरम उपकारा ॥
पर हित लागि तजइ जो देही । संतत संत प्रसंसहिं तेही ॥ १ ॥
अस कहि चलेउ सबहि सिरु नाई । सुमन धनुष कर सहित सहाई ॥
चलत मार अस हृदयँ बिचारा । सिव बिरोध ध्रुव मरनु हमारा ॥ २ ॥
तब आपन प्रभाउ बिस्तारा । निज बस कीन्ह सकल संसारा ॥
कोपेउ जबहिं बारिचरकेतू । छन महुँ मिटे सकल श्रुति सेतू ॥ ३ ॥
ब्रह्मचर्ज ब्रत संजम नाना । धीरज धरम ग्यान बिग्याना ॥
सदाचार जप जोग बिरागा । सभय बिबेक कटकु सबु भागा ॥ ४ ॥

"However, I shall do your work; for the Vedas say benevolence is the highest virtue. The saints ever praise him who lays down his life in the service of others." So saying, the god of love bowed his head to all and departed with his associates, the bow of flowers in hand. While leaving, Love thought within himself that hostility to Śiva would mean sure death to him. He then exhibited his power and brought the whole world under his sway. When the god of love (who bears a fish for his emblem) betrayed his anger, all the barriers imposed by the Vedas were swept away in a moment. The whole army of Viveka (discriminating knowledge),—continence, religious vows, self-restraint of many kinds, fortitude, piety, spiritual

* The white lotus, the Aśoka flower, the mango blossom, the jasmine and the blue lotus—these are the five kinds of arrows with which the god of love is believed to be armed.

wisdom and the knowledge of qualified divinity both with form and without form, morality, muttering of prayers, Yoga (contemplative union with God), dispassion and so on, fled in panic. (1—4)

छं०—भागेउ बिबेकु सहाय सहित सो सुभट संजुग महि मुरे ।
सदग्रंथ पर्बत कंदरन्हि महुँ जाइ तेहि अवसर दुरे ॥
होनिहार का करतार को रखवार जग खरभरु परा ।
दुइ माथ केहि रतिनाथ जेहि कहुँ कोपि कर धनु सरु धरा ॥

Viveka took to flight with his associates; his great warriors turned their back on the field of battle. They all went and hid themselves in mountain-caves in the form of sacred books at that time. There was commotion in the world and everybody said, "My goodness, what is going to happen? What power will save us? Who is that superhuman being with two heads, to conquer whom the lord of Rati*, Love, has lifted his bow and arrows in rage?

दो०—जे सजीव जग अचर चर नारि पुरुष अस नाम ।
ते निज निज मरजाद तजि भए सकल बस काम ॥ ८४ ॥

Whatever creatures existed in the world, whether animate or inanimate and bearing masculine or feminine appellations, transgressed their natural bounds and were completely possessed by lust. (84)

चौ०—सब के हृदयँ मदन अभिलाषा । लता निहारि नवहिं तरु साखा ॥
नदीं उमगि अंबुधि कहुँ धाईं । संगम करहिं तलाव तलाईं ॥ १ ॥
जहँ असि दसा जड़न्ह कै बरनी । को कहि सकइ सचेतन करनी ॥
पसु पच्छी नभ जल थलचारी । भए कामबस समय बिसारी ॥ २ ॥
मदन अंध ब्याकुल सब लोका । निसि दिनु नहिं अवलोकहिं कोका ॥
देव- दनुज नर किंनर ब्याला । प्रेत पिसाच भूत बेताला ॥ ३ ॥
इन्ह कै दसा न कहेउँ बखानी । सदा काम के चेरे जानी ॥
सिद्ध बिरक्त महामुनि जोगी । तेपि कामबस भए बियोगी ॥ ४ ॥

The minds of all were seized with lust; the boughs of trees bent low at the sight of creepers. Rivers in spate rushed to meet the ocean, lakes and ponds united in love with one another. Where such was reported to be the case with the inanimate creation, who can relate the doings of sentient beings? Beasts that walk on land and birds traversing the air, and water lost all sense of time and became victims of lust. The whole world was blinded with passion and agitated. The Chakravāka birds, (ruddy geese)† regarded neither day nor night. Gods, demons, human beings, Kinnaras (a class of demigods), serpents, evil spirits, fiends, ghosts and vampires—I have refrained from dwelling on the condition of these, knowing them to be

* The name of Love's wife.

† The red gander and goose are said to unite only during the daytime. They cannot meet at night even if there is no physical barrier between them. During the brief span of time referred to above they ignored this natural bar and met even during the night.

eternal slaves of passion. Even Siddhas (spiritual adepts), great sages who had no attraction for the world and Yogis (mystics) gave up their Yoga (contemplative union with God) under the influence of lust. (1—4)

छं०—भए कामबस जोगीस तापस पावँरन्हि की को कहै।
देखहिं चराचर नारिमय जे ब्रह्ममय देखत रहे॥
अबला बिलोकहिं पुरुषमय जगु पुरुष सब अबलामयं।
दुइ दंड भरि ब्रह्मांड भीतर कामकृत कौतुक अयं॥

Even great Yogis and ascetics were completely possessed by lust, to say nothing of low-minded people ? Those who till lately looked upon the animate and inanimate creation as full of Brahma (God) now saw it as full of the fair sex. Women perceived the whole world as full of men; while the latter beheld it as full of women. For nearly an hour this wonderful game of Love lasted in the universe.

सो०—धरी न काहूँ धीर सब के मन मनसिज हरे।
जे राखे रघुबीर ते उबरे तेहि काल महुँ॥ ८५॥

Nobody could remain self-possessed; the hearts of all were stolen by the god of love. They alone could hold their own against him, to whom the Hero of Raghu's race extended His protection. (85)

चौ०—उभय घरी अस कौतुक भयऊ। जौ लगि कामु संभु पहिं गयऊ॥
सिवहि बिलोकि ससंकेउ मारू। भयउ जथाथिति सबु संसारू॥ १॥
भए तुरत सब जीव सुखारे। जिमि मद उतरि गएँ मतवारे॥
रुद्रहि देखि मदन भय माना। दुराधरष दुर्गम भगवाना॥ २॥
फिरत लाज कछु करि नहिं जाई। मरनु ठानि मन रचेसि उपाई॥
प्रगटेसि तुरत रुचिर रितुराजा। कुसुमित नव तरु राजि बिराजा॥ ३॥
बन उपबन बापिका तड़ागा। परम सुभग सब दिसा बिभागा॥
जहँ तहँ जनु उमगत अनुरागा। देखि मुएहुँ मन मनसिज जागा॥ ४॥

The wonder lasted for an hour or so till the god of love reached Śambhu. Cupid trembled at the sight of Śiva; the whole world returned to itself. All living beings regained their peace of mind at once, even as the intoxicated feel relieved when their spell of drunkenness is over. The god of love was struck with terror at the sight of Bhagavān Rudra (Śiva), who is so difficult to conquer and so hard to comprehend. He felt shy in retreating and was incapable of doing anything; ultimately he resolved upon death and devised a plan. He forthwith manifested the lovely spring, the king of all seasons; rows of young trees laden with flowers appeared so charming. Woods and groves, wells and ponds and all the quarters of heaven assumed a most delightful aspect. Everywhere nature overflowed with love as it were; the sight aroused passion even in dead souls. (1—4)

छं०—जागइ मनोभव मुएहुँ मन वन सुभगता न परै कही ।
सीतल सुगंध सुमंद मारुत मदन अनल सखा सही ॥
बिकसे सरन्हि बहु कंज गुंजत पुंज मंजुल मधुकरा ।
कलहंस पिक सुक सरस रव करि गान नाचहिं अपछरा ॥

Passion was aroused even in dead souls and the beauty of the forest beggared description. A cool, gentle and fragrant breeze fanned the fire of passion as a faithful companion. Rows of lotuses blossomed in lakes and swarms of charming bees hummed on them. Swans, cuckoos and parrots uttered their sweet notes; while celestial damsels sang and danced.

दो०—सकल कला करि कोटि बिधि हारेउ सेन समेत ।
चली न अचल समाधि सिव कोपेउ हृदयनिकेत ॥ ८६ ॥

The god of love with his army of followers exhausted all his numberless stratagems, Śiva's unbroken trance, however, could not be disturbed. This made Cupid angry. (86)

चौ०—देखि रसाल बिटप बर साखा । तेहि पर चढ़ेउ मदनु मन माखा ॥
सुमन चाप निज सर संधाने । अति रिस ताकि श्रवन लगि ताने ॥ १ ॥
छाड़े बिषम बिसिख उर लागे । छूटि समाधि संभु तब जागे ॥
भयउ ईस मन छोभु बिसेषी । नयन उघारि सकल दिसि देखी ॥ २ ॥
सौरभ पल्लव मदनु बिलोका । भयउ कोपु कंपेउ त्रैलोका ॥
तब सिवँ तीसर नयन उघारा । चितवत कामु भयउ जरि छारा ॥ ३ ॥
हाहाकार भयउ जग भारी । डरपे सुर भए असुर सुखारी ॥
समुझि कामसुखु सोचहिं भोगी । भए अकंटक साधक जोगी ॥ ४ ॥

Seeing a beautiful bough of a mango tree, the god of love climbed up to it in a mood of frustration. He joined his five arrows to his bow of flowers, and casting an angry look drew the string home to his very ears. He discharged the five sharp arrows, which smote the breast of Śiva. The trance was now broken and Śambhu awoke. The Lord's mind was much agitated. Opening His eyes He looked all round. When He saw Cupid hiding behind mango leaves, He flew into a rage, which made all the three spheres tremble. Śiva then uncovered His third eye; the moment He looked at the god of love the latter was reduced to ashes. A loud wail went up through the universe. The gods were alarmed, while the demons were gratified. The thought of (loss of) sense-delights made the voluptuary sad; while the striving Yogīs were relieved of a thorn as it were. (1—4)

छं०—जोगी अकंटक भए पति गति सुनत रति मुरुछित भई ।
रोदति बदति बहु भाँति करुना करति संकर पहिं गई ॥
अति प्रेम करि बिनती बिबिध बिधि जोरि कर सन्मुख रही ।
प्रभु आसुतोष कृपाल सिव अबला निरखि बोले सही ॥

The Yogis were freed from torment; while Rati (wife of the god of love) fainted as soon as she heard of the fate of her lord Weeping and wailing and mourning in various ways she approached Śankara; and making loving entreaties in divergent forms she stood before the Lord with clasped hands. Seeing the helpless woman, the benevolent Lord Śiva, who is so easy to placate, prophesied as follows:—

दो०—अब तें रति तव नाथ कर होइहि नामु अनंगु ।
बिनु बपु ब्यापिहि सबहि पुनि सुनु निज मिलन प्रसंगु ॥ ८७ ॥

"Henceforth, O Rati, your husband shall be called by the name of Ananga (bodiless); he shall dominate all even without a body. Now hear how you will meet him again. (87)

चौ०—जब जदुबंस कृष्न अवतारा । होइहि हरन महा महिभारा ॥
कृष्न तनय होइहि पति तोरा । बचनु अन्यथा होइ न मोरा ॥ १ ॥
रति गवनी सुनि संकर बानी । कथा अपर अब कहउँ बखानी ॥
देवन्ह समाचार सब पाए । ब्रह्मादिक बैकुंठ सिधाए ॥ २ ॥
सब सुर बिष्नु बिरंचि समेता । गए जहाँ सिव कृपानिकेता ॥
पृथक पृथक तिन्ह कीन्हि प्रसंसा । भए प्रसन्न चंद्र अवतंसा ॥ ३ ॥
बोले कृपासिंधु बृषकेतू । कहहु अमर आए केहि हेतू ॥
कह बिधि तुम्ह प्रभु अंतरजामी । तदपि भगति बस बिनवउँ स्वामी ॥ ४ ॥

"When Śrī Kṛṣṇa will descend in the line of Yadu to relieve the earth of its heavy burden, your lord will be born again as His son (Pradyumna); this prediction of Mine can never be untrue." Hearing the words of Śankara, Rati went away. I now proceed to relate the subsequent part of the story. When Brahmā (the Creator) and the other gods received all the tidings, they repaired to Vaikuṇṭha (the abode of God Viṣṇu). Thence all the gods, including Viṣṇu and Virañchi (Brahmā), went where the all-merciful Śiva was. They severally extolled and won the pleasure of the Lord whose crest is adorned by the crescent. Śiva, who is an ocean of compassion and has a bull emblazoned on His standard, said, "Tell me, immortals, what has brought you here ?" To this Brahmā replied, "Lord, You are the inner controller of all, even then, my master, my devotion to You urges me to make the following submission:— (1—4)

दो०—सकल सुरन्ह के हृदयँ अस संकर परम उछाहु ।
निज नयनन्हि देखा चहहिं नाथ तुम्हार बिबाहु ॥ ८८ ॥

"The heart of all the immortals is seized with a dominating impulse. They long to witness Your wedding with their own eyes, my lord. (88)

चौ०—यह उत्सव देखिअ भरि लोचन । सोइ कछु करहु मदन मद मोचन ॥
कामु जारि रति कहुँ बरु दीन्हा । कृपासिंधु यह अति भल कीन्हा ॥ १ ॥
सासति करि पुनि करहिं पसाऊ । नाथ प्रभुन्ह कर सहज सुभाऊ ॥
पारबतीं तपु कीन्ह अपारा । करहु तासु अब अंगीकारा ॥ २ ॥

सुनि बिधि बिनय समुझि प्रभु बानी। ऐसेइ होउ कहा सुखु मानी॥
तब देवन्ह दुंदुभीं बजाईं। बरषि सुमन जय जय सुर साईं॥ ३॥
अवसरु जानि सप्तरिषि आए। तुरतहिं बिधि गिरिभवन पठाए॥
प्रथम गए जहँ रहीं भवानी। बोले मधुर बचन छल सानी॥ ४॥

"O humbler of the pride of Love! Devise some means whereby we may be enabled to feast our eyes on this glad event. Having burnt the god of love You have done well in granting a boon to Rati, O ocean of compassion. Having meted out punishment, good masters shower their grace as a matter of course· such is their natural habit. Pārvatī has practised penance the magnitude of which cannot be estimated, kindly accept her now." Hearing the entreaty of Brahmā and remembering the words of the Lord (Śrī Rāma), Śiva gladly said, "Amen!" The gods thereupon sounded their kettle-drums, and raining down flowers they exclaimed, "Victory, victory to the Lord of celestials!" Considering it to be an opportune moment, the seven seers arrived on the scene. Brahmā immediately sent them to the abode of Himavān. They approached Bhavānī in the first instance and addressed the following sweet yet deceptive words to her:— (1—4)

दो०—कहा हमार न सुनेहु तब नारद कें उपदेस।
अब भा झूठ तुम्हार पन जारेउ कामु महेस॥ ८९॥

"Relying on the advice of Nārada you would not heed our remonstrances then. Your vow has failed now; for the great Lord Śiva has burnt the god of love!" (89)

[PAUSE 3 FOR A THIRTY-DAY RECITATION]

चौ०—सुनि बोलीं मुसुकाइ भवानी। उचित कहेहु मुनिबर बिग्यानी॥
तुम्हरें जान कामु अब जारा। अब लगि संभु रहे सबिकारा॥ १॥
हमरें जान सदा सिव जोगी। अज अनवद्य अकाम अभोगी॥
जौं मैं सिव सेये अस जानी। प्रीति समेत कर्म मन बानी॥ २॥
तौ हमार पन सुनहु मुनीसा। करिहहिं सत्य कृपानिधि ईसा॥
तुम्ह जो कहा हर जारेउ मारा। सोइ अति बड़ अबिबेकु तुम्हारा॥ ३॥
तात अनल कर सहज सुभाऊ। हिम तेहि निकट जाइ नहिं काऊ॥
गएँ समीप सो अवसि नसाई। असि मन्मथ महेस की नाई॥ ४॥

Hearing this, Bhavānī smiled and said, "O great and illumined sages, you have spoken aright. According to your belief it is only now that Śambhu has burnt the god of love and that till now He was smitten with love. To my mind, however, Śiva is eternally in rapport with the Infinite, unbegotten, irreproachable, passionless and without enjoyment. Knowing Him as such, if I have served Him lovingly in thought, word and deed, then hear, O great sages: the gracious Lord will accomplish my vow. Your statement that Hara has burnt the god of love betrays woeful lack of thought in you. Fire, my friends, possesses this inherent property that frost can never approach it: in case it does it must inevitably perish. Similar is the case with the god of love and the great Lord Śiva. (1—4)

दो०—हियँ हरषे मुनि बचन सुनि देखि प्रीति बिस्वास ।
चले भवानिहि नाइ सिर गए हिमाचल पास ॥ ९० ॥

Hearing the words of Bhavānī and perceiving her devotion and faith, the sages were gladdened at heart. Bowing their head to Her, they went to Himavān. (90)

चौ०—सबु प्रसंगु गिरिपतिहि सुनावा । मदन दहन सुनि अति दुखु पावा ॥
बहुरि कहेउ रति कर बरदाना । सुनि हिमवंत बहुत सुखु माना ॥ १ ॥
हृदयँ बिचारि संभु प्रभुताई । सादर मुनिबर लिए बोलाई ॥
सुदिनु सुनखतु सुघरी सोचाई । बेगि बेदबिधि लगन धराई ॥ २ ॥
पत्री सप्तरिषिन्ह सोइ दीन्ही । गहि पद बिनय हिमाचल कीन्ही ॥
जाइ बिधिहि तिन्ह दीन्हि सो पाती । बाचत प्रीति न हृदयँ समाती ॥ ३ ॥
लगन बाचि अज सबहि सुनाई । हरषे मुनि सब सुर समुदाई ॥
सुमन बृष्टि नभ बाजन बाजे । मंगल कलस दसहुँ दिसि साजे ॥ ४ ॥

They related the whole episode to him and he was much grieved to hear how Śiva had burnt Love. The sages then told him of the boon granted to Rati and Himavān was much relieved to learn this. Recalling to his mind the glory of Śambhu, Himāchala respectfully summoned great sages. He had an auspicious date, asterism and hour ascertained and speedily got the exact time of wedding fixed and noted down according to the Vedic precepts. Himāchala handed over the note recording the exact time of wedding to the seven seers, and clasping their feet made entreaties to them. Calling on Brahmā they delivered the note to him; and as he went through it his heart overflowed with joy. Brahmā read the note aloud to all; the sages as well as the whole concourse of gods was delighted to hear it. Flowers were showered from the air, music flowed from various instruments and auspicious jars were placed in all directions. (1—4)

दो०—लगे सँवारन सकल सुर बाहन बिबिध बिमान ।
होहिं सगुन मंगल सुभद करहिं अपछरा गान ॥ ९१ ॥

All the gods began to adorn their vehicles and aerial cars of various kinds; happy and auspicious omens were visible and celestial damsels sang for joy. (91)

चौ०—सिवहि संभु गन करहिं सिंगारा । जटा मुकुट अहि मौरु सँवारा ॥
कुंडल कंकन पहिरे ब्याला । तन बिभूति पट केहरि छाला ॥ १ ॥
ससि ललाट सुंदर सिर गंगा । नयन तीनि उपबीत भुजंगा ॥
गरल कंठ उर नर सिर माला । असिव बेष सिवधाम कृपाला ॥ २ ॥
कर त्रिसूल अरु डमरु बिराजा । चले बसहँ चढ़ि बाजहिं बाजा ॥
देखि सिवहि सुरत्रिय मुसुकाहीं । बर लायक दुलहिनि जग नाहीं ॥ ३ ॥
बिष्नु बिरंचि आदि सुरब्राता । चढ़ि चढ़ि बाहन चले बराता ॥
सुर समाज सब भाँति अनूपा । नहिं बरात दूलह अनुरूपा ॥ ४ ॥

The attendants of Śambhu began to adorn their lord. His matted locks were formed into a crown and decked with a crest of serpents. He had serpents for His ear-rings and bracelets, smeared His person with ashes and wrapped a lion's skin round His loins. He bore the crescent on His charming brow and the river Gangā on the crown of His head and had three eyes and a serpent for the sacred thread. His throat was black with the poison swallowed by Him at the beginning of creation and had a wreath of human skulls about His neck. Thus clad in a ghastly attire, He was nonetheless an embodiment of blessings and merciful to the core. A trident and a Ḍamaru (a small drum shaped like an hour-glass) adorned His hands. Śiva rode on a bull while musical instruments played. Female divinities smiled to see Him. "The world has no bride worthy of the bridegroom," they said to one another. Viṣṇu, Brahmā and hosts of other gods joined the bridegroom's procession and rode on their respective vehicles. The gathering of the immortals was incomparable in every respect, the procession, however, was hardly worthy of the bridegroom. (1—4)

दो०—बिष्नु कहा अस बिहसि तब बोलि सकल दिसिराज ।
बिलग बिलग होइ चलहु सब निज निज सहित समाज ॥ ९२ ॥

God Viṣṇu then called all the guardians of the different quarters and smilingly said, "Every one of you should march separately, each with his own retinue. (92)

चौ०—बर अनुहारि बरात न भाई । हँसी करैहहु पर पुर जाई ॥
बिष्नु बचन सुनि सुर मुसुकाने । निज निज सेन सहित बिलगाने ॥ १ ॥
मनहीं मन महेसु मुसुकाहीं । हरि के बिंग्य बचन नहिं जाहीं ॥
अति प्रिय बचन सुनत प्रिय केरे । भृंगिहि प्रेरि सकल गन टेरे ॥ २ ॥
सिव अनुसासन सुनि सब आए । प्रभु पद जलज सीस तिन्ह नाए ॥
नाना बाहन नाना बेषा । बिहसे सिव समाज निज देखा ॥ ३ ॥
कोउ मुखहीन बिपुल मुख काहू । बिनु पद कर कोउ बहु पद बाहू ॥
बिपुल नयन कोउ नयन बिहीना । रिष्टपुष्ट कोउ अति तनखीना ॥ ४ ॥

"The procession, brothers, is no way worthy of the bridegroom; you will make yourself a butt of ridicule in a strange city !" Hearing the words of Viṣṇu, the gods smiled and parted, each with his own group. The great Lord Śiva laughed in His sleeves and noticed that Śrī Hari's humour never failed. As soon as He heard these most pleasing remarks of His beloved friend, He sent Bhṛṅgī to call all His attendants. And they all came when they heard Śiva's command and bowed their head at the lotus feet of their lord. Śiva laughed to see His host in their motley attire riding every kind of vehicle. Some were headless, while others were hydra-headed monsters; some were without hands and feet, while others had numerous hands and feet. Some had numerous eyes, while others had no eyes at all; some were stout and well-built, while others had very slim bodies. (1—4)

छं०—तन खीन कोउ अति पीन पावन कोउ अपावन गति धरें ।
भूषन कराल कपाल कर सब सद्य सोनित तन भरें ॥

खर स्वान सुअर सृकाल मुख गन बेष अगनित को गनै ।
बहु जिनस प्रेत पिसाच जोगि जमात बरनत नहिं बनै ॥

Some had lean and thin bodies, while others were very stout; some were tidy, while others had dirty habits. They had frightful ornaments, carried skulls in their hands and were all smeared with fresh blood. They bore heads of donkeys, dogs, swine and jackals and the varieties of their clothes could not be counted. The troops of spirits, goblins and fairies of various kinds beggared description.

सो०—नाचहिं गावहिं गीत परम तरंगी भूत सब ।
देखत अति बिपरीत बोलहिं बचन बिचित्र बिधि ॥ ९३ ॥

The ghosts danced and sang, they were all extremely fantastic. They looked most absurd and spoke words in a peculiar style. (93)

चौ०—जस दूलहु तसि बनी बराता । कौतुक बिबिध होहिं मग जाता ॥
इहाँ हिमाचल रचेउ बिताना । अति बिचित्र नहिं जाइ बखाना ॥ १ ॥
सैल सकल जहँ लगि जग माहीं । लघु बिसाल नहिं बरनि सिराहीं ॥
बन सागर सब नदीं तलावा । हिमगिरि सब कहुँ नेवत पठावा ॥ २ ॥
कामरूप सुंदर तन धारी । सहित समाज सहित बर नारी ॥
गए सकल तुहिनाचल गेहा । गावहिं मंगल सहित सनेहा ॥ ३ ॥
प्रथमहिं गिरि बहु गृह सँवराए । जथाजोगु तहँ तहँ सब छाए ॥
पुर सोभा अवलोकि सुहाई । लागइ लघु बिरंचि निपुनाई ॥ ४ ॥

The procession was now quite worthy of the bridegroom; the processionists indulged in gaieties of various kinds as they went along. On the other side Himāchala erected a most wonderful pavilion which beggared description. As many mountains as existed in the world, small or big, more than man can count, and the whole host of woods, seas, rivers and ponds* were all invited by Himāchala. Capable of taking any form they liked, they assumed handsome figures and repaired to the house of Himālaya along with their retinues and fair consorts. They all sang festive songs out of affection. The mountain-king had already caused a number of houses to be tastefully decorated; all the guests were lodged therein, each occupying a house befitting one's status. The splendour of the city was so captivating that after a glance at it the creative skill of Brahmā himself looked very small. (1—4)

छं०—लघु लाग बिधि की निपुनता अवलोकि पुर सोभा सही ।
बन बाग कूप तड़ाग सरिता सुभग सब सक को कही ॥
मंगल बिपुल तोरन पताका केतु गृह गृह सोहहीं ।
बनिता पुरुष सुंदर चतुर छबि देखि मुनि मन मोहहीं ॥

* According to the Hindu scriptures every natural object is believed to be presided over by a spirit; it is these spirits that are referred to here.

A glance at the beautiful city made the creative art of Brahmā himself pale into insignificance. Groves and gardens, wells and ponds and rivers, all looked charming beyond words. Every house was decorated with a number of triumphal arches, flags and buntings. Men and women of the city were so lovely and ingenious that they enraptured the hearts even of sages.

दो०—जगदंबा जहँ अवतरी सो पुरु बरनि कि जाइ ।
रिद्धि सिद्धि संपत्ति सुख नित नूतन अधिकाइ ॥ ९४ ॥

The city in which the Mother of the universe had bodied Herself forth baffled all description. Prosperity and success, wealth and happiness were always on the increase there and presented a new aspect. (94)

चौ०—नगर निकट बरात सुनि आई । पुर खरभरु सोभा अधिकाई ॥
करि बनाव सजि बाहन नाना । चले लेन सादर अगवाना ॥ १ ॥
हियँ हरषे सुर सेन निहारी । हरिहि देखि अति भए सुखारी ॥
सिव समाज जब देखन लागे । बिडरि चले बाहन सब भागे ॥ २ ॥
धरि धीरजु तहँ रहे सयाने । बालक सब लै जीव पराने ॥
गएँ भवन पूछहिं पितु माता । कहहिं बचन भय कंपित गाता ॥ ३ ॥
कहिअ काह कहि जाइ न बाता । जम कर धार किधौं बरिआता ॥
बरु बौराह बसहँ असवारा । ब्याल कपाल बिभूषन छारा ॥ ४ ॥

When it was heard that the bridegroom's procession was close at hand, there was commotion in the city, which added to its charm. Adorning themselves and decorating their vehicles of various kinds, a party proceeded in advance to receive the procession with due honour. They were gladdened at heart to see the gathering of the immortals. And they were all the more happy to behold Śrī Hari (Viṣṇu) But when they started looking at Śiva's retinue, every animal they rode started back and fled in panic. The adults recovered themselves and remained where they were, while every child that came ran for its life. On their reaching home when their parents questioned them, they spoke as follows, their limbs still shaking with fear, "What shall we say? The sight was such as could not be described. We wonder whether it was a bridegroom's procession or the army of Death. The bridegroom is a maniac, riding on a bull; serpents, skulls and ashes are his ornaments (1–4)

छं०—तन छार ब्याल कपाल भूषन नगन जटिल भयंकरा ।
सँग भूत प्रेत पिसाच जोगिनि बिकट मुख रजनीचरा ॥
जो जिअत रहिहि बरात देखत पुन्य बड़ तेहि कर सही ।
देखिहि सो उमा बिबाहु घर घर बात असि लरिकन्ह कही ॥

"His body is smeared with ashes and adorned with serpents and skulls. He is naked, has matted hair on his head and is dreadful to look at. He is accompanied by ghosts and evil spirits, goblins and fairies and demons with a

frightful countenance. He who survives on seeing the bridegroom's procession is a man of great luck indeed and he alone will witness the wedding of Umā.'' These were the words uttered by the children from house to house.

दो०—समुझि महेस समाज सब जननि जनक मुसुकाहिं ।
बाल बुझाए बिबिध बिधि निडर होहु डरु नाहिं ॥ ९५ ॥

The parents smiled; for they knew that the children were talking of Śiva's retinue. They reassured the children in many ways and said, "Be not afraid, there is no cause for fear.'' (95)

चौ०—लै अगवान बरातहि आए । दिए सबहि जनवास सुहाए ॥
मैनाँ सुभ आरती सँवारी । संग सुमंगल गावहिं नारी ॥ १ ॥
कंचन थार सोह बर पानी । परिछन चली हरहि हरषानी ॥
बिकट बेष रुद्रहि जब देखा । अबलन्ह उर भय भयउ बिसेषा ॥ २ ॥
भागि भवन पैठीं अति त्रासा । गए महेसु जहाँ जनवासा ॥
मैना हृदयँ भयउ दुखु भारी । लीन्ही बोलि गिरीसकुमारी ॥ ३ ॥
अधिक सनेहँ गोद बैठारी । स्याम सरोज नयन भरे बारी ॥
जेहिं बिधि तुम्हहि रूपु अस दीन्हा । तेहिं जड़ बरु बाउर कस कीन्हा ॥ ४ ॥

The party which had gone ahead to receive the bridegroom's procession returned with the procession and assigned beautiful lodgings to all the guests. Menā (Pārvatī's mother) kindled auspicious lights for waving round the bridegroom and the women accompanying her sang melodious songs of rejoicing. A salver of gold adorned Menā's fair hands and she proceeded to welcome Lord Hara with great delight. The women were seized with excessive fear when they saw Rudra (Śiva) in frightful accoutrements. They fled in great panic and entered the house; while the great Lord Śiva repaired to the lodgings of the bridegroom's party. Menā was sore distressed at heart and sent for Pārvatī. With great affection she seated her in her lap; and tears rushed to her eyes, which resembled a pair of blue lotuses. "To think that the Creator, who has made you so beautiful, should have been stupid enough to give you such a raving madman for a bridegroom! (1—4)

छं०—कस कीन्ह बरु बौराह बिधि जेहिं तुम्हहि सुंदरता दई ।
जो फलु चहिअ सुरतरुहिं सो बरबस बबूरहिं लागई ॥
तुम्ह सहित गिरि तें गिरौं पावक जरौं जलनिधि महुँ परौं ।
घरु जाउ अपजसु होउ जग जीवत बिबाहु न हौं करौं ॥

"How strange that the Creator, who has made you so lovely, should have given you a crazy fellow for a bridegroom! A fruit which should have adorned the wish-yielding tree is helplessly appearing on a thorny Baboo[illegible]. Taking you in my arms I would sooner fall from a mountain-top, cast myself into the flames or drown myself into the sea. Let my home be ruined and let me earn a bad reputation throughout the world; but in no case [illegible] I marry you with this maniac so long as there is life in me.''

दो०—भईं बिकल अबला सकल दुखित देखि गिरिनारि ।
करि बिलापु रोदति बदति सुता सनेहु सँभारि ॥ ९६ ॥

All the ladies assembled there were distressed when they saw the consort of Himāchala sad. Recalling the affection of her daughter she wailed, wept and exclaimed as below:— (96)

चौ०—नारद कर मैं काह बिगारा । भवनु मोर जिन्ह बसत उजारा ॥
अस उपदेसु उमहि जिन्ह दीन्हा । बौरे बरहि लागि तपु कीन्हा ॥ १ ॥
साचेहुँ उन्ह कें मोह न माया । उदासीन धनु धामु न जाया ॥
पर घर घालक लाज न भीरा । बाँझ कि जान प्रसव कै पीरा ॥ २ ॥
जननिहि बिकल बिलोकि भवानी । बोली जुत बिबेक मृदु बानी ॥
अस बिचारि सोचहि मति माता । सो न टरइ जो रचइ बिधाता ॥ ३ ॥
करम लिखा जौं बाउर नाहू । तौ कत दोसु लगाइअ काहू ॥
तुम्ह सन मिटहिं कि बिधि के अंका । मातु ब्यर्थ जनि लेहु कलंका ॥ ४ ॥

"What harm have I done to Nārada that he should have ruined my happy home and tendered such advice to Umā as made her undergo penance for securing a crazy husband ? In good sooth the sage is passionless and without affection: he has no wealth, no dwelling and no wife and is indifferent to all. That is why he destroys others' homes. He has neither shame nor fear. What does a barren woman know of the pains of childbirth ?" Seeing Her mother distressed, Bhavānī addressed the following soft yet prudent words to her. "Whatever is ordained by Providence cannot be altered Realizing this be not worried, mother. If I am destined to have a crazy husband, why should anyone be blamed for it ? Can you alter the decree of Providence ? Therefore, take no reproach on you unnecessarily. (1—4)

छं०—जनि लेहु मातु कलंकु करुना परिहरहु अवसर नहीं ।
दुखु सुखु जो लिखा लिलार हमरें जाब जहँ पाउब तहीं ॥
सुनि उमा बचन बिनीत कोमल सकल अबला सोचहीं ।
बहु भाँति बिधिहि लगाइ दूषन नयन बारि बिमोचहीं ॥

"Take no reproach on you; cease lamenting· this is no occasion for it. The amount of joy and sorrow that has fallen to my lot I must reap wherever I go." Hearing the soft and polite words of Umā all the ladies became sad. They blamed the Creator in many ways and tears flowed from their eyes.

दो०—तेहि अवसर नारद सहित अरु रिषि सप्त समेत ।
समाचार सुनि तुहिनगिरि गवने तुरत निकेत ॥ ९७ ॥

On hearing the news that very moment Himāchala came to his house along with Nārada and the seven seers. (97)

चौ०—तब नारद सबही समुझावा । पूरुब कथाप्रसंगु सुनावा ॥
मयना सत्य सुनहु मम बानी । जगदंबा तव सुता भवानी ॥ १ ॥
अजा अनादि सक्ति अबिनासिनि । सदा संभु अरधंग निवासिनि ॥
जग संभव पालन लय कारिनि । निज इच्छा लीला बपु धारिनि ॥ २ ॥
जनमीं प्रथम दच्छ गृह जाई । नामु सती सुंदर तनु पाई ॥
तहँहुँ सती संकरहि बिबाहीं । कथा प्रसिद्ध सकल जग माहीं ॥ ३ ॥
एक बार आवत सिव संगा । देखेउ रघुकुल कमल पतंगा ॥
भयउ मोहु सिव कहा न कीन्हा । भ्रम बस बेषु सीय कर लीन्हा ॥ ४ ॥

Then Nārada reassured them all, narrating to them the past history of Umā. He said, "Menā, hear my true words: your daughter is none else than Bhavānī (the eternal Consort of Śiva), Mother of the universe. She is the unborn and imperishable divine energy, which has no beginning, She is Śambhu's inseparable half. She creates, maintains and then dissolves the universe and assumes the semblance of a material form of Her own will. First She was born in the house of Dakṣa Satī was Her name and charming was Her form. Even in that incarnation Satī was married with Śankara. The story is well-known throughout the world. One day, while She was returning home with Śiva, She beheld Śrī Rāma, who is a sun as it were to the lotus-like race of Raghu. Bewildered by His sight, She did not listen to Śiva's advice and was beguiled into assuming the disguise of Sītā. (1—4)

छं०—सिय बेषु सतीं जो कीन्ह तेहिं अपराध संकर परिहरीं ।
हर बिरहँ जाइ बहोरि पितु कें जग्य जोगानल जरीं ॥
अब जनमि तुम्हरें भवन निज पति लागि दारुन तपु किया ।
अस जानि संसय तजहु गिरिजा सर्बदा संकर प्रिया ॥

"Śankara repudiated Her because She had offended Him by assuming the disguise of Sītā. Separated from Hara, She then visited the sacrifice undertaken by Her father and burnt Herself in the fire of Yoga (meditation) there. Now, reborn in your house, She has undergone terrible penance for the sake of Her lord. Knowing this, give up all doubt, Girijā (your daughter) is ever beloved of Śankara."

दो०—सुनि नारद के बचन तब सब कर मिटा बिषाद ।
छन महुँ ब्यापेउ सकल पुर घर घर यह संबाद ॥ ९८ ॥

When they heard Nārada's explanation, the sadness of all was dispersed. In a trice the news spread from house to house throughout the city. (98)

चौ०—तब मयना हिमवंतु अनंदे । पुनि पुनि पारबती पद बंदे ॥
नारि पुरुष सिसु जुबा सयाने । नगर लोग सब अति हरषाने ॥ १ ॥
लगे होन पुर मंगलगाना । सजे सबहिं हाटक घट नाना ॥
भाँति अनेक भई जेवनारा । सूपसास्त्र जस कछु ब्यवहारा ॥ २ ॥

सो जेवनार कि जाइ बखानी । बसहिं भवन जेहिं मातु भवानी ॥
सादर बोले सकल बराती । बिष्नु बिरंचि देव सब जाती ॥ ३ ॥
बिबिधि पाँति बैठी जेवनारा । लागे परुसन निपुन सुआरा ॥
नारि बृंद सुर जेवँत जानी । लगीं देन गारीं मृदु बानी ॥ ४ ॥

Then Menā and her consort Himavān rejoiced and bowed at Pārvatī's feet again and again. All the citizens, including men, women and children, youngmen as well as elderly people, were immensely delighted. Festive songs began to be sung in the city, vases of gold of every pattern were displayed by all. Dishes of various kinds were prepared in accordance with the processes given in gastrological works. Is it ever possible to describe the varieties of dishes prepared in the house where lived Mother Bhavānī? Himāchala respectfully summoned all the members of the bridegroom's party, including Viṣṇu, Brahmā and other gods of all classes The dinner guests sat in many rows, and expert cooks began to serve. Finding the gods dining, batches of women began to banter and rail at them in pleasant strains.

(1—4)

छं०—गारीं मधुर स्वर देहिं सुंदरि बिंग्य बचन सुनावहीं ।
भोजनु करहिं सुर अति बिलंबु बिनोदु सुनि सचु पावहीं ॥
जेवँत जो बढ़्यो अनंदु सो मुख कोटिहूँ न परै कह्यो ।
अचवाँइ दीन्हे पान गवने बास जहँ जाको रह्यो ॥

Charming women railed in sweet strains and poured innuendoes. The gods felt much amused to hear them and dined for an unusually long time. The joy that swelled at the dinner cannot be described even with millions of tongues. Having been served with water for rinsing their mouths at the end of the dinner, they were given betel-leaves; and then they returned to their respective lodgings.

दो०—बहुरि मुनिन्ह हिमवंत कहुँ लगन सुनाई आइ ।
समय बिलोकि बिवाह कर पठए देव बोलाइ ॥ ९९ ॥

The seven sages called once more and read out to Himavān the note recording the time fixed for the wedding; and perceiving that the hour had arrived, the latter sent for the gods.

(99)

चौ०—बोलि सकल सुर सादर लीन्हे । सबहि जथोचित आसन दीन्हे ॥
बेदी बेद बिधान सँवारी । सुभग सुमंगल गावहिं नारी ॥ १ ॥
सिंघासनु अति दिब्य सुहावा । जाइ न बरनि बिरंचि बनावा ॥
बैठे सिव बिप्रन्ह सिरु नाई । हृदयँ सुमिरि निज प्रभु रघुराई ॥ २ ॥
बहुरि मुनीसन्ह उमा बोलाईं । करि सिंगारु सखीं लै आईं ॥
देखत रूपु सकल सुर मोहे । बरनै छबि अस जग कबि को है ॥ ३ ॥
जगदंबिका जानि भव भामा । सुरन्ह मनहिं मन कीन्ह प्रनामा ॥
सुंदरता मरजाद भवानी । जाइ न कोटिहुँ बदन बखानी ॥ ४ ॥

Himavān politely sent for all the gods and assigned an appropriate seat to each of them. An altar was prepared in accordance with the Vedic ritual and women chanted charming festal strains. A divinely beautiful throne with the images of a pair of lions for its arms was placed on the altar, being a handiwork of the Creator himself, it beggared description. Bowing His head to the Brahmans and calling to His mind His own Master, the Lord of Raghus, Śiva took His seat on the throne. The great sages then sent for Umā, who was brought in by Her girl companions richly adorned. All the gods were enraptured at Her beauty. What poet in the world could describe such loveliness ? Recognizing in Her the Mother of the universe and Spouse of Śiva, the divinities mentally bowed to Her. The perfection of beauty that Bhavānī was could not be adequately praised even with millions of tongues. (1—4)

छं०—कोटिहुँ बदन नहिं बनै बरनत जग जननि सोभा महा ।
सकुचहिं कहत श्रुति सेष सारद मंदमति तुलसी कहा ॥
छबि खानि मातु भवानि गवनीं मध्य मंडप सिव जहाँ ।
अवलोकि सकहिं न सकुच पति पद कमल मनु मधुकरु तहाँ ॥

The superb beauty of the Mother of the universe could not be described even with millions of tongues. When even the Vedas, Śeṣa (the serpent-god) and Śāradā (the goddess of learning) shrink abashed, of what account is the dull-witted Tulasīdāsa ? Mother Bhavānī, the mine of beauty, walked to the middle of the pavilion, where Śiva was. Out of shyness She could not gaze on Her lord's lotus feet, although Her heart was fixed thereon like a bee.

दो०—मुनि अनुसासन गनपतिहि पूजेउ संभु भवानि ।
कोउ सुनि संसय करै जनि सुर अनादि जियँ जानि ॥ १०० ॥

At the direction of the sages Śambhu and Bhavānī paid divine honours to Lord Gaṇapati. Let no one be puzzled to hear this; for one should bear in mind that gods have existed from time without beginning.* (100)

चौ०—जसि बिबाह कै बिधि श्रुति गाई । महामुनिन्ह सो सब करवाई ॥
गहि गिरीस कुस कन्या पानी । भवहि समरपीं जानि भवानी ॥ १ ॥
पानिग्रहन जब कीन्ह महेसा । हियँ हरषे तब सकल सुरेसा ॥
बेदमंत्र मुनिबर उच्चरहीं । जय जय जय संकर सुर करहीं ॥ २ ॥
बाजहिं बाजन बिबिध बिधाना । सुमनबृष्टि नभ भै बिधि नाना ॥
हर गिरिजा कर भयउ बिबाहू । सकल भुवन भरि रहा उछाहू ॥ ३ ॥
दासीं दास तुरग रथ नागा । धेनु बसन मनि बस्तु बिभागा ॥
अन्न कनकभाजन भरि जाना । दाइज दीन्ह न जाइ बखाना ॥ ४ ॥

* Lord Gaṇapati is reputed to be an offspring of Śiva and Pārvatī. It may, therefore, be asked how He came to be worshipped by the divine pair even at the time of their wedding. The poet meets this question by stating that Gaṇeśa and the other gods are eternal and unbegotten and that they only appear to be born.

The great sages had the nuptial ceremony performed in all its details as laid down in the Vedas. Taking sacred Kuśa grass in his hand and holding the bride by Her hand, the mountain-king Himālaya made Her over to Bhava (Śiva) knowing Her to be His eternal consort. When the great Lord Śiva took the hand of the bride, all the great gods were glad at heart. The principal sages chanted the Vedic formulas, while the gods exclaimed, "Victory, victory, all victory to Śankara !" Musical instruments of various kinds were sounded and flowers of different varieties were rained down from the heavens. The wedding of Hara and Girijā was thus concluded. A spirit of rejoicing pervaded the whole universe. Men-servants and maid-servants, horses and chariots, elephants and cows, raiment, jewels and various other articles and even so cart-loads of foodgrains and gold utensils were given as dowry, which was more than one could describe. (1—4)

छं०—दाइज दियो बहु भाँति पुनि कर जोरि हिमभूधर कह्यो ।
का देउँ पूरनकाम संकर चरन पंकज गहि रह्यो ॥
सिवँ कृपासागर ससुर कर संतोषु सब भाँतिहिं कियो ।
पुनि गहे पद पाथोज मयनाँ प्रेम परिपूरन हियो ॥

Himāchala gave presents of various kinds as dowry; then, joining his palms, he said, "I have nothing to give You, Śankara, You have all Your desires sated !" He could say no more and remained clasping the latter's feet. The ocean of mercy that Śiva is reassured His father-in-law in every possible way. Then Menā, with her heart overflowing with love, clasped His lotus feet and said:—

दो०—नाथ उमा मम प्रान सम गृहकिंकरी करेहु ।
छमेहु सकल अपराध अब होइ प्रसन्न बरु देहु ॥ १०१ ॥

"Lord, Umā is dear to me as life; take her as a maid-servant of Your house and forgive all her faults. Be pleased to grant this boon to me." (101)

चौ०—बहु बिधि संभु सासु समुझाई । गवनी भवन चरन सिरु नाई ॥
जननीं उमा बोलि तब लीन्ही । लै उछंग सुंदर सिख दीन्ही ॥ १ ॥
करेहु सदा संकर पद पूजा । नारिधरमु पति देउ न दूजा ॥
बचन कहत भरे लोचन बारी । बहुरि लाइ उर लीन्हि कुमारी ॥ २ ॥
कत बिधि सृजीं नारि जग माहीं । पराधीन सपनेहुँ सुखु नाहीं ॥
भै अति प्रेम बिकल महतारी । धीरजु कीन्ह कुसमय बिचारी ॥ ३ ॥
पुनि पुनि मिलति परति गहि चरना । परम प्रेमु कछु जाइ न बरना ॥
सब नारिन्ह मिलि भेटि भवानी । जाइ जननि उर पुनि लपटानी ॥ ४ ॥

Śambhu comforted His mother-in-law in ways more than one; and she returned home bowing her head at His feet. The mother then sent for Umā, and taking Her into her lap gave Her the following excellent advice: "Ever adore the feet of Śankara· this sums up the duty of a wife. Her husband is her deity; there is no other god for her" As she spoke these words, her eyes filled with tears

and she pressed the girl to her bosom. "Why has god created woman in this world ? One who is dependent on others can never dream of happiness." The mother was overwhelmed with emotion, but knowing as she did that it was not an opportune moment for betraying one's weakness, she recovered herself. Menā met Pārvatī again and again and fell down clasping the girl's feet, her supreme love was beyond all words. Bidding adieu to all the ladies Bhavānī ran and clung to her mother's breast once more. (1—4)

छं०—जननिहि बहुरि मिलि चली उचित असीस सब काहूँ दईं ।
फिरि फिरि बिलोकति मातु तन तब सखीं लै सिव पहिं गईं ॥
जाचक सकल संतोषि संकरु उमा सहित भवन चले ।
सब अमर हरषे सुमन बरषि निसान नभ बाजे भले ॥

Taking leave of Her mother once more, Bhavānī departed; everyone uttered appropriate blessings to Her. She often turned back to have a look at Her mother; Her girl companions then took Her to Śiva Having gratified all beggars, Śankara proceeded to His home (Mount Kailāsa) with Umā. All the divinities delightfully rained down flowers and kettledrums produced a charming sound in the heavens.

दो०—चले संग हिमवंतु तब पहुँचावन अति हेतु ।
बिबिध भाँति परितोषु करि बिदा कीन्ह बृषकेतु ॥ १०२ ॥

Himavān then accompanied Śiva in order to escort Him with great affection. Śiva, however, sent him back, consoling him in various ways. (102)

चौ०—तुरत भवन आए गिरिराई । सकल सैल सर लिए बोलाई ॥
आदर दान बिनय बहुमाना । सब कर बिदा कीन्ह हिमवाना ॥ १ ॥
जबहिं संभु कैलासहिं आए । सुर सब निज निज लोक सिधाए ॥
जगत मातु पितु संभु भवानी । तेहिं सिंगारु न कहउँ बखानी ॥ २ ॥
करहिं बिबिध बिधि भोग बिलासा । गनन्ह समेत बसहिं कैलासा ॥
हर गिरिजा बिहार नित नयऊ । एहि बिधि बिपुल काल चलि गयऊ ॥ ३ ॥
तब जनमेउ षटबदन कुमारा । तारकु असुरु समर जेहिं मारा ॥
आगम निगम प्रसिद्ध पुराना । षन्मुख जन्मु सकल जग जाना ॥ ४ ॥

The mountain-king returned home at once and summoned all other mountains and lakes. Himavān greeted them with due attention, gifts, polite words and great honour and allowed them all to depart. No sooner had Śambhu reached Mount Kailāsa than all the gods returned to their respective realms. Śambhu and Bhavānī are the parents of the universe; hence I refrain from portraying their amorous sports. Indulging in luxuries and enjoyments of various kinds the divine pair lived on Mount Kailāsa along with Their attendants. Hara and Girijā enjoyed some new delight every day. In this way a considerable time elapsed. Thereafter was born to them a boy with six heads, who (later on) killed the demon Tāraka in battle. The story of Sanmukha (the six-headed deity) is well-known in the Vedas, Tantras and Purānas, and the entire world knows it.

(1—4)

छं०—जगु जान षन्मुख जन्मु कर्मु प्रतापु पुरुषारथु महा ।
तेहि हेतु मैं वृषकेतु सुत कर चरित संछेपहिं कहा ॥
यह उमा संभु बिवाहु जे नर नारि कहहिं जे गावहीं ।
कल्यान काज बिवाह मंगल सर्बदा सुखु पावहीं ॥

The tale of the birth, exploits, glory and surpassing strength of Saṇmukha is known to the whole world. That is why I have briefly touched the narrative of Śiva's son. Men and women who narrate or sing this story of the wedding of Umā and Śambhu shall ever rejoice in their auspicious undertakings as well as during festive occasions such as wedding etc.

दो०—चरित सिंधु गिरिजा रमन बेद न पावहिं पारु ।
बरनै तुलसीदासु किमि अति मतिमंद गवाँरु ॥ १०३ ॥

The exploits of Girijā's lord are illimitable like the ocean, even the Vedas cannot reach their end How, then, can Tulasīdāsa, a most dull-witted clown, succeed in describing them ? (103)

चौ०—संभु चरित सुनि सरस सुहावा । भरद्वाज मुनि अति सुखु पावा ॥
बहु लालसा कथा पर बाढ़ी । नयनन्हि नीरु रोमावलि ठाढ़ी ॥ १ ॥
प्रेम बिबस मुख आव न बानी । दसा देखि हरषे मुनि ग्यानी ॥
अहो धन्य तव जन्मु मुनीसा । तुम्हहि प्रान सम प्रिय गौरीसा ॥ २ ॥
सिव पद कमल जिन्हहि रति नाहीं । रामहि ते सपनेहुँ न सोहाहीं ॥
बिनु छल बिस्वनाथ पद नेहू । राम भगत कर लच्छन एहू ॥ ३ ॥
सिब सम को रघुपति ब्रतधारी । बिनु अघ तजी सती असि नारी ॥
पनु करि रघुपति भगति देखाई । को सिव सम रामहि प्रिय भाई ॥ ४ ॥

Bharadwāja was much delighted to hear the sweet and charming story of Śambhu's deeds. His passion for hearing the story grew to be inordinate; tears rushed to his eyes and the hair on his body bristled with joy. Overpowered with emotion he could not utter a word. The enlightened sage Yājñavalkya was delighted to see his condition. "Blessed indeed is your birth, O great sage," he said, "to you the Lord of Gaurī is dear as life Those who love not Śiva's lotus feet cannot even dream of pleasing Rāma. A guileless love for Śiva's feet is the surest sign of a devotee of Rāma. Who is so faithful to the Lord of Raghus as Śiva, who renounced a sinless wife like Satī, and demonstrated ideal devotion to Rāma by His pledge of unswerving fidelity ? Brother, whom does Rāma hold so dear as Śiva ? (1—4)

दो०—प्रथमहिं मैं कहि सिव चरित बूझा मरमु तुम्हार ।
सुचि सेवक तुम्ह राम के रहित समस्त बिकार ॥ १०४ ॥

"Having begun by recounting the deeds of Śiva I have come to know your secret. You are indeed a faithful servant of Rāma, free from all impurities. (104)

चौ०—मैं जाना तुम्हार गुन सीला । कहउँ सुनहु अब रघुपति लीला ॥
सुनु मुनि आजु समागम तोरें । कहि न जाइ जस सुखु मन मोरें ॥ १ ॥
राम चरित अति अमित मुनीसा । कहि न सकहिं सत कोटि अहीसा ॥
तदपि जथाश्रुत कहउँ बखानी । सुमिरि गिरापति प्रभु धनुपानी ॥ २ ॥
सारद दारुनारि सम स्वामी । रामु सूत्रधर अंतरजामी ॥
जेहि पर कृपा करहिं जनु जानी । कवि उर अजिर नचावहिं बानी ॥ ३ ॥
प्रनवउँ सोइ कृपाल रघुनाथा । बरनउँ बिसद तासु गुन गाथा ॥
परम रम्य गिरिबरु कैलासू । सदा जहाँ सिव उमा निवासू ॥ ४ ॥

I have come to know your virtues and disposition. Listen, therefore, while I narrate the story of the Lord of Raghus. O sage, I cannot say how glad I am at this meeting with you today. O lord of sages, the exploits of Śrī Rāma are much beyond measure; even a thousand million Śeṣas (serpent-kings) cannot recount them. Nevertheless, fixing my thoughts on the Lord who wields a bow in His hand and is the lord of speech, I repeat the tale as I have heard it. Śāradā (the goddess of speech) is like a puppet; while Śrī Rāma, the inner controller of all, is the master of the puppet show, who holds the strings in his hands. When He blesses a poet knowing him to be a devotee, He causes the goddess to dance in the courtyard of his heart. To Him, the benevolent Lord of Raghus, I bow and commence the recital of His fair virtues. Of all mountains the most charming and the best is Kailāsa, where Śiva and Umā eternally dwell. (1—4)

दो०—सिद्ध तपोधन जोगिजन सुर किंनर मुनिबृंद ।
बसहिं तहाँ सुकृती सकल सेवहिं सिव सुखकंद ॥ १०५ ॥

Hosts of Siddhas (adepts), ascetics and Yogīs (mystics), as well as gods, Kinnaras and sages, all lucky souls, reside there and adore Śiva, the root of all joy. (105)

चौ०—हरि हर बिमुख धर्म रति नाहीं । ते नर तहँ सपनेहुँ नहिं जाहीं ॥
तेहि गिरि पर बट बिटप बिसाला । नित नूतन सुंदर सब काला ॥ १ ॥
त्रिबिध समीर सुसीतलि छाया । सिव बिश्राम बिटप श्रुति गाया ॥
एक बार तेहि तर प्रभु गयऊ । तरु बिलोकि उर अति सुखु भयऊ ॥ २ ॥
निज कर डासि नागरिपु छाला । बैठे सहजहिं संभु कृपाला ॥
कुंद इंदु दर गौर सरीरा । भुज प्रलंब परिधन मुनिचीरा ॥ ३ ॥
तरुन अरुन अंबुज सम चरना । नख दुति भगत हृदय तम हरना ॥
भुजग भूति भूषन त्रिपुरारी । आननु सरद चंद छबि हारी ॥ ४ ॥

Those who have their faces turned away from Hari and Hara and have no love for righteousness cannot even dream of going there. On the summit of that mountain exists a huge banyan tree, which is ever young and is charming during all seasons. Fanned by cool, soft and fragrant breezes, its shade is very refreshing. It is the favourite resort of Śiva, extolled by the Vedas.

Once upon a time the Lord betook Himself beneath the tree and was much gladdened at heart to see it. Spreading His tigerskin on the ground with His own hands, the all-merciful Śiva sat down casually. His body fair in hue as the jasmine, the moon and the conch-shell; arms of inordinate length, a hermit's covering, consisting of the bark of trees, wrapped round His loins, His feet resembling a pair of full-blown red lotuses and their toe-nails shedding a lustre which dispelled the darkness of the devotee's heart; serpents and the ashes serving as ornaments of the Slayer of Tripura and His countenance eclipsing the splendour even of the autumnal full moon (1—4)

दो०—जटा मुकुट सुरसरित सिर लोचन नलिन बिसाल ।
नीलकंठ लावन्य निधि सोह बाल बिधु भाल ॥ १०६ ॥

With His twisted coils of hair for a crown and the celestial stream (the Gangā) adorning His head, eyes as big as a pair of lotuses, throat dark with poison and with the crescent shining on His brow, the Lord looked like a veritable mine of beauty. (106)

चौ०—बैठे सोह कामरिपु कैसें । धरें सरीरु सांतरसु जैसें ॥
पारबती भल अवसरु जानी । गईं संभु पहिं मातु भवानी ॥ १ ॥
जानि प्रिया आदरु अति कीन्हा । बाम भाग आसनु हर दीन्हा ॥
बैठीं सिव समीप हरषाई । पूरुब जन्म कथा चित आई ॥ २ ॥
पति हियँ हेतु अधिक अनुमानी । बिहसि उमा बोलीं प्रिय बानी ॥
कथा जो सकल लोक हितकारी । सोइ पूछन चह सैलकुमारी ॥ ३ ॥
बिस्वनाथ मम नाथ पुरारी । त्रिभुवन महिमा बिदित तुम्हारी ॥
चर अरु अचर नाग नर देवा । सकल करहिं पद पंकज सेवा ॥ ४ ॥

Seated there, the Destroyer of Cupid looked like an incarnation of the sentiment of Quietism. Finding it a good opportunity, Mother Bhavānī called on Śambhu. In recognition of Her wifely love Lord Hara showed Her great courtesy and assigned Her a seat on His left side. Pārvatī gladly sat down beside Śiva and recalled the history of Her past life. Presuming that Her lord cherished in His heart greater love for Her than before, Umā smilingly spoke the following sweet words to Him the Daughter of Himālaya sought to elicit from Her lord the story which is profitable to the whole world. "O Lord of the universe, O my Master, O slayer of the demon Tripura! Your glory is known to all the three spheres. Animate as well inanimate beings, Nāgas, men and gods, all do homage to Your lotus feet. (1—4)

दो०—प्रभु समरथ सर्बग्य सिव सकल कला गुन धाम ।
जोग ग्यान बैराग्य निधि प्रनत कलपतरु नाम ॥ १०७ ॥

"My lord, You are all-powerful, all-wise and all-blissful, You are a repository of all arts and virtues and a storehouse of Yoga (askesis), wisdom and dispassion. Your Name is a wish-yielding tree as it were to the suppliant. (107)

चौ०—जौं मो पर प्रसन्न सुखरासी । जानिअ सत्य मोहि निज दासी ॥
तौ प्रभु हरहु मोर अग्याना । कहि रघुनाथ कथा बिधि नाना ॥ १ ॥
जासु भवनु सुरतरु तर होई । सहि कि दरिद्र जनित दुखु सोई ॥
ससिभूषन अस हृदयँ बिचारी । हरहु नाथ मम मति भ्रम भारी ॥ २ ॥
प्रभु जे मुनि परमारथबादी । कहहिं राम कहुँ ब्रह्म अनादी ॥
सेस सारदा बेद पुराना । सकल करहिं रघुपति गुन गाना ॥ ३ ॥
तुम्ह पुनि राम राम दिन राती । सादर जपहु अनँग आराती ॥
रामु सो अवध नृपति सुत सोई । की अज अगुन अलखगति कोई ॥ ४ ॥

"O blissful Lord, if You are pleased with me and know me to be Your faithful servant, then, my Master, disperse my ignorance by repeating to me the various stories of the Lord of Raghus. Why should he who has his abode beneath a wish-yielding tree undergo the suffering born of want ? Bearing this in mind, O Lord with the crescent on the forehead, dispel the great confusion of my mind. O Lord, the sages who discourse on the supreme Reality speak of Rāma as the Brahma who has no beginning; Śeṣa and Śāradā, as well as the Vedas and the Purāṇas, all sing praises of the Lord of Raghus. You too, O Subduer of Love, reverently repeat the word 'Rāma' night and day. Is this Rāma the same as the son of the King of Ayodhyā or some other unborn, unqualified and imperceptible Being ? (1—4)

दो०—जौं नृप तनय त ब्रह्म किमि नारि बिरहँ मति भोरि ।
देखि चरित महिमा सुनत भ्रमति बुद्धि अति मोरि ॥ १०८ ॥

"If a king's son, how could he be Brahma (the Infinite) ? And if he were Brahma, how could his mind get unhinged by the loss of his wife ? When I see his acts on the one hand, and hear of his glory on the other, my mind gets utterly confused. (108)

चौ०—जौं अनीह ब्यापक बिभु कोऊ । कहहु बुझाइ नाथ मोहि सोऊ ॥
अग्य जानि रिस उर जनि धरहू । जेहि बिधि मोह मिटै सोइ करहू ॥ १ ॥
मैं बन दीखि राम प्रभुताई । अति भय बिकल न तुम्हहि सुनाई ॥
तदपि मलिन मन बोधु न आवा । सो फलु भली भाँति हम पावा ॥ २ ॥
अजहूँ कछु संसउ मन मोरें । करहु कृपा बिनवउँ कर जोरें ॥
प्रभु तब मोहि बहु भाँति प्रबोधा । नाथ सो समुझि करहु जनि क्रोधा ॥ ३ ॥
तब कर अस बिमोह अब नाहीं । रामकथा पर रुचि मन माहीं ॥
कहहु पुनीत राम गुन गाथा । भुजगराज भूषन सुरनाथा ॥ ४ ॥

"If, my lord, there is any other desireless, all-pervading and all-powerful Brahma, instruct me about the same. Be not angry at my folly, but take steps to wipe out my ignorance. In the wood (in my previous birth) I witnessed Śrī Rāma's glory, although I was too awe-stricken to tell You. Yet, my mind was so impure that I did not understand, and I reaped a good return for my folly. Some doubt still lingers in my mind. Be gracious to me, I implore

You with joined palms. Lord, You instructed me then in ways more than one, yet I did not understand. Do not allow this thought to anger You. I have no such delusion now: I find developed in me a taste for hearing the story of Rāma. Recount the sacred virtues of Śrī Rāma, O Lord of immortals, having the serpent-king (Śeṣa) for an ornament. (1—4)

दो०—बंदउँ पद धरि धरनि सिरु बिनय करउँ कर जोरि।
बरनहु रघुबर बिसद जसु श्रुति सिद्धांत निचोरि॥ १०९॥

"Placing my head on the ground, I adore Your feet and entreat You with joined palms to recount the unsullied glory of the Chief of Raghus, giving in substance the conclusion of the revealed texts (the Vedas) on the subject. (109)

चौ०—जदपि जोषिता नहिं अधिकारी। दासी मन क्रम बचन तुम्हारी॥
गूढ़उ तत्त्व न साधु दुरावहिं। आरत अधिकारी जहँ पावहिं॥ १॥
अति आरति पूछउँ सुरराया। रघुपति कथा कहहु करि दाया॥
प्रथम सो कारन कहहु बिचारी। निर्गुन ब्रह्म सगुन बपु धारी॥ २॥
पुनि प्रभु कहहु राम अवतारा। बालचरित पुनि कहहु उदारा॥
कहहु जथा जानकी बिबाहीं। राज तजा सो दूषन काहीं॥ ३॥
बन बसि कीन्हे चरित अपारा। कहहु नाथ जिमि रावन मारा॥
राज बैठि कीन्हीं बहु लीला। सकल कहहु संकर सुखसीला॥ ४॥

"Though as a woman I am not qualified to hear it, I am Your servant in thought, word and deed. Saints do not withhold even an esoteric truth wherever they find a man smitten with agony, and therefore qualified to receive it. I ask You with a heart sore distressed; be gracious enough to narrate the story of the Lord of Raghus. First tell me after a mature thought what makes the unqualified Brahma assume a qualified form. Then, my lord, relate the story of Śrī Rāma's descent, and tell me next the charming exploits of His childhood. Then let me know how He wedded Janaka's Daughter, Sītā, and the fault for which He had to renounce His father's kingdom later on. Then describe the innumerable deeds performed by Him while He lived in the forest; and further tell me, my lord, how He killed Rāvaṇa. Then relate, O blissful Śankara, all the numerous sports that were enacted by Him after His coronation.

(1—4)

दो०—बहुरि कहहु करुनायतन कीन्ह जो अचरज राम।
प्रजा सहित रघुबंसमनि किमि गवने निज धाम॥ ११०॥

"Thereafter relate, O gracious Lord, the miracle wrought by Rāma, viz., how that Jewel of Raghu's line proceeded to His divine Abode along with all His subjects. (110)

चौ०—पुनि प्रभु कहहु सो तत्त्व बखानी। जेहिं बिग्यान मगन मुनि ग्यानी॥
भगति ग्यान बिग्यान बिरागा। पुनि सब बरनहु सहित बिभागा॥ १॥

औरउ राम रहस्य अनेका । कहहु नाथ अति बिमल बिबेका ॥
जो प्रभु मैं पूछा नहिं होई । सोउ दयाल राखहु जनि गोई ॥ २ ॥
तुम्ह त्रिभुवन गुर बेद बखाना । आन जीव पावँर का जाना ॥
प्रस्न उमा कै सहज सुहाई । छल बिहीन सुनि सिव मन भाई ॥ ३ ॥
हर हियँ राम चरित सब आए । प्रेम पुलक लोचन जल छाए ॥
श्रीरघुनाथ रूप उर आवा । परमानंद अमित सुख पावा ॥ ४ ॥

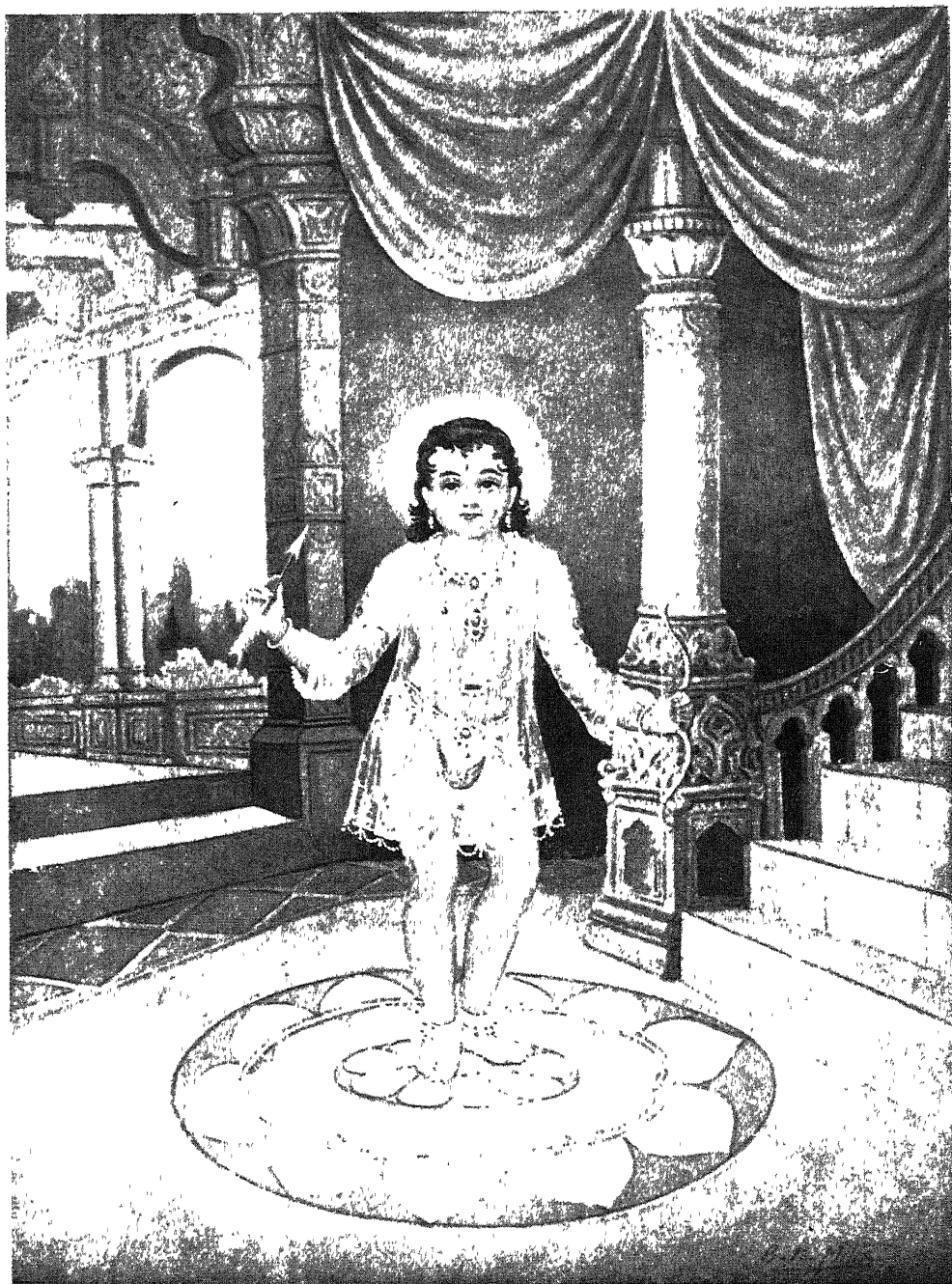
"Then expound, my lord, the truth in the realization of which enlightened sages remain absorbed And thereafter discuss in detail the conceptions of Devotion, Jñāna or Knowledge of the formless Absolute, Vijñāna or the Knowledge of qualified Divinity with and without form, and Dispassion. Over and above this, O Lord of purest understanding, reveal to me the many other mysteries connected with Rāma. And if there be anything which I have omitted to ask, do not keep it back, my gracious lord. You are the preceptor of all the three spheres, so declare the Vedas; what can other poor creatures know?" Śiva was glad at heart to hear these questions of Umā, naturally pleasing and guileless as they were. All the exploits of Rāma flashed on His mind, the hair on His body bristled with rapture and His eyes filled with tears. The figure of Śrī Rāma was reflected on the mirror of His heart. This brought immense joy to Śiva, who is an embodiment of supreme bliss Himself.

(1—4)

दो०—मगन ध्यान रस दंड जुग पुनि मन बाहेर कीन्ह ।
रघुपति चरित महेस तब हरषित बरनै लीन्ह ॥ १११ ॥

For an hour or so Śiva was lost in the ecstasy of meditation. He then recovered Himself and thereafter began joyfully to tell the story of Rāma (111)

चौ०—झूठेउ सत्य जाहि बिनु जानें । जिमि भुजंग बिनु रजु पहिचानें ॥
जेहि जानें जग जाइ हेराई । जागें जथा सपन भ्रम जाई ॥ १ ॥
बंदउँ बालरूप सोइ रामू । सब सिधि सुलभ जपत जिसु नामू ॥
मंगल भवन अमंगल हारी । द्रवउ सो दसरथ अजिर बिहारी ॥ २ ॥
करि प्रनाम रामहि त्रिपुरारी । हरषि सुधा सम गिरा उचारी ॥
धन्य धन्य गिरिराजकुमारी । तुम्ह समान नहिं कोउ उपकारी ॥ ३ ॥
पूँछेहु रघुपति कथा प्रसंगा । सकल लोक जग पावनि गंगा ॥
तुम्ह रघुबीर चरन अनुरागी । कीन्हिहु प्रस्न जगत हित लागी ॥ ४ ॥

"Due to lack of knowledge about Śrī Rāma even the unreal passes for real, just as ignorance about a rope leads us to mistake it for a snake. Even so the moment we know Him the world of matter vanishes, just as the delusion of a dream disappears as soon as we wake up. Him do I reverence in the form of a Child, the repetition of whose Name brings all kinds of success within our easy reach. May that Home of bliss and Bane of woe take compassion on me,—He who sports in the courtyard of King Daśaratha." After thus paying homage to Rāma, the Slayer of the demon Tripura joyfully

The Child Rāma

spoke in mellifluous accents as follows: "You are indeed blessed and worthy of applause, O daughter of the mountain-king; there is no such benefactor as you. You have asked me to repeat the history of the Lord of Raghus, which is potent enough to sanctify all the spheres even as the Gangā purifies the whole world. You are full of love for the feet of the Hero of Raghu's race; You have put questions to Me only with an eye to the good of the world. (1—4)

दो०—राम कृपा तें पारबति सपनेहुँ तव मन माहिं ।
सोक मोह संदेह भ्रम मम बिचार कछु नाहिं ॥ ११२ ॥

"By the blessing of Rāma, O Pārvatī, not even in dream can grief, infatuation, doubt or error enter your mind, so far as I can judge. (112)

चौ०—तदपि असंका कीन्हिहु सोई । कहत सुनत सब कर हित होई ॥
जिन्ह हरिकथा सुनी नहिं काना । श्रवन रंध्र अहिभवन समाना ॥ १ ॥
नयनन्हि संत दरस नहिं देखा । लोचन मोरपंख कर लेखा ॥
ते सिर कटु तुंबरि समतूला । जे न नमत हरि गुर पद मूला ॥ २ ॥
जिन्ह हरि भगति हृदयँ नहिं आनी । जीवत सव समान तेइ प्रानी ॥
जो नहिं करइ राम गुन गाना । जीह सो दादुर जीह समाना ॥ ३ ॥
कुलिस कठोर निठुर सोइ छाती । सुनि हरि चरित न जो हरषाती ॥
गिरिजा सुनहु राम कै लीला । सुर हित दनुज बिमोहनसीला ॥ ४ ॥

"Yet you have expressed the same old doubts again, so that all those who repeat or hear this account may be benefited thereby. The ears of those who have never heard the stories of Śrī Hari are no better than snake-holes. The eyes of those who have not blessed them with the sight of saints are as good as the sham eyes in a peacock's tail. The heads that bow not at the soles of Śrī Hari or of one's preceptor are just like bitter pumpkins. Those who have cherished not in their heart the spirit of devotion to Śrī Hari are as good as dead, though living. The tongue that does not sing the praises of Rāma is just like the tongue of a frog. The heart which does not rejoice to hear the tales of Śrī Hari is hard as adamant and cruel indeed. Hear, O Girijā, the exploits of Śrī Rāma, which prove beneficial to the gods and mystify the demons. (1—4)

दो०—रामकथा सुरधेनु सम सेवत सब सुख दानि ।
सतसमाज सुरलोक सब को न सुनै अस जानि ॥ ११३ ॥

"Like the cow of plenty, the story of Rāma bestows all blessings on those who devote themselves to it; and the assemblages of saints are the various abodes of gods. Knowing this, who would not listen to it? (113)

चौ०—रामकथा सुंदर कर तारी । संसय बिहग उड़ावनिहारी ॥
रामकथा कलि बिटप कुठारी । सादर सुनु गिरिराजकुमारी ॥ १ ॥

राम नाम गुन चरित सुहाए। जनम करम अगनित श्रुति गाए॥
जथा अनंत राम भगवाना। तथा कथा कीरति गुन नाना॥ २ ॥
तदपि जथा श्रुत जसि मति मोरी। कहिहउँ देखि प्रीति अति तोरी॥
उमा प्रस्न तव सहज सुहाई। सुखद संतसंमत मोहि भाई॥ ३ ॥
एक बात नहिं मोहि सोहानी। जदपि मोह बस कहेहु भवानी॥
तुम्ह जो कहा राम कोउ आना। जेहि श्रुति गाव धरहिं मुनि ध्याना॥ ४ ॥

"The story of Rāma is the lovely clap of hand-palms, which scares away the birds of doubt. Even so the story of Rāma is an axe to the tree of Kaliyuga (the impurities of the Kali age), listen to it with reverence, O daughter of the mountain-king. The charming names of Śrī Rāma, as well as His virtues, stories, births and deeds have all been declared by the Vedas to be beyond number. As there is no end to the divine Rāma, even so His stories, glory and virtues are also endless. Yet, seeing your great love, I will tell them even as I have heard of them to the best of my intellectual capacity Umā, your inquiries are naturally winning and delightful and such as are approved of by the saints; as for myself I am particularly pleased to hear them. But there was one thing, Bhavānī, which I did not like, although you uttered it under a spell of delusion: you suggested that the Rāma whom the Vedas extol and on whom the sages contemplate is someone else!

(1—4)

दो०—कहहिं सुनहिं अस अधम नर ग्रसे जे मोह पिसाच।
पाखंडी हरि पद बिमुख जानहिं झूठ न साच॥ ११४ ॥

"Such words are spoken and heard by those vile men alone who are possessed by the devil of infatuation, are impious and averse to the feet of Śrī Hari and know no difference between truth and falsehood, (114)

चौ०—अग्य अकोबिद अंध अभागी। काई बिषय मुकुर मन लागी॥
लंपट कपटी कुटिल बिसेषी। सपनेहुँ संतसभा नहिं देखी॥ १ ॥
कहहिं ते बेद असंमत बानी। जिन्ह कें सूझ लाभु नहिं हानी॥
मुकुर मलिन अरु नयन बिहीना। राम रूप देखहिं किमि दीना॥ २ ॥
जिन्ह कें अगुन न सगुन बिबेका। जल्पहिं कल्पित बचन अनेका॥
हरिमाया बस जगत भ्रमाहीं। तिन्हहि कहत कछु अघटित नाहीं॥ ३ ॥
बातुल भूत बिबस मतवारे। ते नहिं बोलहिं बचन बिचारे॥
जिन्ह कृत महामोह मद पाना। तिन्ह कर कहा करिअ नहिं काना॥ ४ ॥

"Foolish, ignorant and blind wretches, the mirror of whose heart is clouded by the film of sensuality, lecherous, deceitful and grossly perverse, who have never seen an assemblage of holy men even in a dream and who have no sense of gain and loss, they alone make statements which are repugnant to the Vedas. The mirror of their heart is soiled and they have no eyes to see; how, then, can those wretched souls behold the beauty of Śrī Rāma ? For those who have no knowledge either of the unqualified Brahma or of qualified Divinity, who indulge in fantastic utterances of various kinds and who spin

round in this world under the influence of Śrī Hari's deluding potency, no assertion is too absurd to make. Those who are delirious or mad, those who are possessed and those who are inebriated do not talk sense. None should give ear to the ravings of those who have drunk the wine of infatuation. (1—4)

सो०—अस निज हृदयँ बिचारि तजु संसय भजु राम पद ।
सुनु गिरिराजकुमारि भ्रम तम रबि कर बचन मम ॥ ११५ ॥

"Thus assured in your heart, discard all doubt and adore Śrī Rāma's feet. O daughter of the mountain-king, hear my words, which are sun-beams as it were for the darkness of error. (115)

चौ०—सगुनहि अगुनहि नहिं कछु भेदा । गावहिं मुनि पुरान बुध बेदा ॥
अगुन अरूप अलख अज जोई । भगत प्रेम बस सगुन सो होई ॥ १ ॥
जो गुन रहित सगुन सोइ कैसें । जलु हिम उपल बिलग नहिं जैसें ॥
जासु नाम भ्रम तिमिर पतंगा । तेहि किमि कहिअ बिमोह प्रसंगा ॥ २ ॥
राम सच्चिदानंद दिनेसा । नहिं तहँ मोह निसा लवलेसा ॥
सहज प्रकासरूप भगवाना । नहिं तहँ पुनि बिग्यान बिहाना ॥ ३ ॥
हरष बिषाद ग्यान अग्याना । जीव धर्म अहमिति अभिमाना ॥
राम ब्रह्म ब्यापक जग जाना । परमानंद परेस पुराना ॥ ४ ॥

"There is no difference between qualified Divinity and the unqualified Brahma: so declare the sages and men of wisdom, the Vedas and the Purāṇas. That which is attributeless and formless, imperceptible and unborn, becomes qualified under the influence of the devotee's love How can the Absolute become qualified ? In the same way as water and the hail-stone are non-different in substance. Infatuation is out of the question for Him whose very Name is like the sun to the darkness of error. Śrī Rāma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss combined, is like the sun; the night of ignorance cannot subsist in Him even to the smallest degree. He is the Lord whose very being is light, there is no dawn of understanding in His case. (For the dawn presupposes night and night there is none in the sunlight of Śrī Rāma.) Joy and grief, knowledge and ignorance, egoism and pride—these are the characteristics of a Jīva (finite being). Śrī Rāma is the all-pervading Brahma; He is supreme bliss personified, the highest lord and the most ancient Being. The whole world knows it. (1—4)

दो०—पुरुष प्रसिद्ध प्रकास निधि प्रगट परावर नाथ ।
रघुकुलमनि मम स्वामि सोइ कहि सिवँ नायउ माथ ॥ ११६ ॥

"He who is universally known as the Spirit, the fount of light, manifest in all forms and is the lord of life as well as of matter, that Jewel of Raghu's line is my Master." So saying Śiva bowed His head to Him. (116)

चौ०—निज भ्रम नहिं समुझहिं अग्यानी । प्रभु पर मोह धरहिं जड़ प्रानी ॥
जथा गगन घन पटल निहारी । झाँपेउ भानु कहहिं कुबिचारी ॥ १ ॥

चितव जो लोचन अंगुलि लाएँ। प्रगट जुगल ससि तेहि के भाएँ॥
उमा राम बिषइक अस मोहा। नभ तम धूम धूरि जिमि सोहा॥ २॥
बिषय करन सुर जीव समेता। सकल एक तें एक सचेता॥
सब कर परम प्रकासक जोई। राम अनादि अवधपति सोई॥ ३॥
जगत प्रकास्य प्रकासक रामू। मायाधीस ग्यान गुन धामू॥
जासु सत्यता तें जड़ माया। भास सत्य इव मोह सहाया॥ ४॥

"Fools do not perceive their own error: on the other hand, those stupid creatures attribute infatuation to the Lord, just as on seeing the sky covered with clouds, men of unsound judgment declare that the sun has been screened by the clouds. To him who sees with a finger stuck into his eyes the moon appears as doubled. Umā, infatuation is attributed to Rāma in the same way as darkness, smoke or dust appears in the sky. The objects of the senses, the senses and their presiding deities as well as the Jīva (embodied soul)—all these derive their illumination one from the other. (That is to say, the objects are illumined by the senses, the senses are illumined by their presiding deities and the deities presiding over the senses are illumined by the conscious Self.) The supreme illuminator of them all is the eternal Rāma, King of Ayodhyā. The world of matter is the object of illumination, while Rāma is its illuminator. He is the lord of Māyā and the abode of wisdom and virtues. It is due to His reality that even unconscious Matter appears as real through ignorance.

(1—4)

दो०—रजत सीप महुँ भास जिमि जथा भानु कर बारि।
जदपि मृषा तिहुँ काल सोइ भ्रम न सकइ कोउ टारि॥ ११७॥

"Just as a shell is mistaken for silver and a mirage for water even though the appearance is false at all times (in the past, present and future), nobody can dispel this delusion (117)

चौ०—एहि बिधि जग हरि आश्रित रहई। जदपि असत्य देत दुख अहई॥
जौं सपनें सिर काटै कोई। बिनु जागें न दूरि दुख होई॥ १॥
जासु कृपाँ अस भ्रम मिटि जाई। गिरिजा सोइ कृपाल रघुराई॥
आदि अंत कोउ जासु न पावा। मति अनुमानि निगम अस गावा॥ २॥
बिनु पद चलइ सुनइ बिनु काना। कर बिनु करम करइ बिधि नाना॥
आनन रहित सकल रस भोगी। बिनु बानी बकता बड़ जोगी॥ ३॥
तन बिनु परस नयन बिनु देखा। ग्रहइ घ्रान बिनु बास असेषा॥
असि सब भाँति अलौकिक करनी। महिमा जासु जाइ नहिं बरनी॥ ४॥

"In a like manner is this world of matter superimposed on Hari. Though unreal, it gives us pain nonetheless, just as if a man's head is cut off in a dream, he is not rid of pain till he wakes. Girijā, He whose grace wipes out such delusion is none else than the benevolent Lord of Raghus. Nobody has been able to discover His beginning or end. Basing their conclusions on

speculation the Vedas have described Him in the following words. He walks without feet, hears without ears and performs actions of various kinds even without hands. He enjoys all tastes without a mouth (palate) and is a most clever speaker even though devoid of speech. He touches without a body (the tactile sense), sees without eyes and catches all odours even without a nose (the olifactory sense). His ways are thus supernatural in every respect and His glory is beyond description. (1—4)

दो०—जेहि इमि गावहिं बेद बुध जाहि धरहिं मुनि ध्यान ।
सोइ दसरथ सुत भगत हित कोसलपति भगवान ॥ ११८ ॥

"He who is thus extolled by the Vedas and men of wisdom and whom the sages love to contemplate is no other than the divine Rāma, son of Daśaratha, lord of Ayodhyā, the friend of His devotees. (118)

चौ०—कासीं मरत जंतु अवलोकी । जासु नाम बल करउँ बिसोकी ॥
सोइ प्रभु मोर चराचर स्वामी । रघुबर सब उर अंतरजामी ॥ १ ॥
बिबसहुँ जासु नाम नर कहहीं । जनम अनेक रचित अघ दहहीं ॥
सादर सुमिरन जे नर करहीं । भव बारिधि गोपद इव तरहीं ॥ २ ॥
राम सो परमातमा भवानी । तहँ भ्रम अति अबिहित तव बानी ॥
अस संसय आनत उर माहीं । ग्यान बिराग सकल गुन जाहीं ॥ ३ ॥
सुनि सिव के भ्रम भंजन बचना । मिटि गै सब कुतरक कै रचना ॥
भइ रघुपति पद प्रीति प्रतीती । दारुन असंभावना बीती ॥ ४ ॥

"When I behold any creature dying in the holy Kāśī (the modern Banaras), it is by the power of His Name that I rid it of all sorrow (liberate it). He is my lord, the Chief of Raghus, the sovereign of all creation, animate as well as inanimate, the witness of all hearts. If men repeat His Name even in a helpless state, sins committed by them in a series of previous existences are burnt away, while those who devoutly remember Him are able to cross the ocean of mundane existence as if it were a mere hollow made by the hoof of a cow. Rāma is no other than that supreme Spirit, Bhavānī; your assertion that He is subject to delusion is wholly unwarranted. The moment a man harbours such a doubt in his mind, his wisdom, dispassion and all other virtues bid adieu to him." When Pārvatī heard Śiva's illuminating words, the whole structure of her sophistry collapsed. Attachment and devotion to the feet of the Lord of Raghus sprang in her heart and her shocking incredulity disappeared. (1—4)

दो०—पुनि पुनि प्रभु पद कमल गहि जोरि पंकरुह पानि ।
बोलीं गिरिजा बचन बर मनहुँ प्रेम रस सानि ॥ ११९ ॥

Clasping the lotus feet of her lord again and again, and joining her lotus-like palms, Pārvatī spoke the following fine words, steeping them as it were in the nectar of love:— (119)

चौ०—ससि कर सम सुनि गिरा तुम्हारी । मिटा मोह सरदातप भारी ॥
तुम्ह कृपाल सबु संसउ हरेऊ । राम स्वरूप जानि मोहि परेऊ ॥ १ ॥
नाथ कृपाँ अब गयउ बिषादा । सुखी भयउँ प्रभु चरन प्रसादा ॥
अब मोहि आपनि किंकरि जानी । जदपि सहज जड़ नारि अयानी ॥ २ ॥
प्रथम जो मैं पूछा सोइ कहहू । जौं मो पर प्रसन्न प्रभु अहहू ॥
राम ब्रह्म चिनमय अबिनासी । सर्ब रहित सब उर पुर बासी ॥ ३ ॥
नाथ धरेउ नरतनु केहि हेतू । मोहि समुझाइ कहहु बृषकेतू ॥
उमा बचन सुनि परम बिनीता । रामकथा पर प्रीति पुनीता ॥ ४ ॥

"Now that I have listened to Your words, which were refreshing as moonbeams, my ignorance, like the feverish heat of the autumnal sunshine, has faded away. You have removed all my doubt, O gracious Lord, and the reality of Rāma has been revealed to me. By Your grace, my lord, my gloom has been lifted and I feel happy now by the blessing of my lord's feet. Now, regarding me as Your slave, even though I am a woman, ignorant and stupid by nature, answer my former question, if You are pleased with me, my lord. Rāma, I now understand, is no other than the indestructible Brahma (God), who is consciousness itself and who, though bereft of all, yet dwells in the heart of all. Why did He take the form of a human being? Explain this to me, O Śankara." Hearing Umā's most polite words and seeing Her unadulterated love for the story of Śrī Rāma,— (1—4)

दो०—हियँ हरषे कामारि तब संकर सहज सुजान ।
बहु बिधि उमहि प्रसंसि पुनि बोले कृपानिधान ॥ १२० (क) ॥

—The all-merciful and all-wise Śankara, the Destroyer of Cupid, was glad at heart and, extolling Umā in so many ways, said:— (120 A)

[PAUSE 1 FOR A NINE-DAY RECITATION]

[PAUSE 4 FOR A THIRTY-DAY RECITATION]

सो०—सुनु सुभ कथा भवानि रामचरितमानस बिमल ।
कहा भुसुंडि बखानि सुना बिहग नायक गरुड़ ॥ १२० (ख) ॥
सो संबाद उदार जेहि बिधि भा आगें कहब ।
सुनहु राम अवतार चरित परम सुंदर अनघ ॥ १२० (ग) ॥
हरि गुन नाम अपार कथा रूप अगनित अमित ।
मैं निज मति अनुसार कहउँ उमा सादर सुनहु ॥ १२० (घ) ॥

"Hear the blessed story of the holy *Rāmacharitamānasa*, which was narrated at length by the sage Bhuśundi and heard by the king of birds, Garuḍa. I shall tell you later on how that great dialogue took place. First listen to the most charming and sanctifying story of His descent. The virtues, names, stories and forms of Śrī Hari are all unlimited, innumerable and immeasurable. Yet I proceed to tell them according to the best of my intellectual capacity; listen, Umā, with reverence (120 B—D)

चौ०—सुनु गिरिजा हरिचरित सुहाए। बिपुल बिसद निगमागम गाए॥
हरि अवतार हेतु जेहि होई। इदमित्थं कहि जाइ न सोई॥ १॥
राम अतर्क्य बुद्धि मन बानी। मत हमार अस सुनहि सयानी॥
तदपि संत मुनि बेद पुराना। जस कछु कहहिं स्वमति अनुमाना॥ २॥
तस मैं सुमुखि सुनावउँ तोही। समुझि परइ जस कारन मोही॥
जब जब होइ धरम कै हानी। बाढ़हिं असुर अधम अभिमानी॥ ३॥
करहिं अनीति जाइ नहिं बरनी। सीदहिं बिप्र धेनु सुर धरनी॥
तब तब प्रभु धरि बिबिध सरीरा। हरहिं कृपानिधि सज्जन पीरा॥ ४॥

"Hark, O Girijā: the Vedas and the Tantras have sung numerous charming and sinless exploits of Śrī Hari. The cause of Śrī Hari's descent cannot be precisely stated. Listen, O sensible lady: Śrī Rāma is beyond the grasp of intellect, mind or speech: such is my conviction. Yet, O charming lady, I tell you the reason as I understand it and even as the saints and sages, the Vedas and the Purāṇas have stated according to their intellectual level Whenever virtue declines and vile and haughty demons multiply and work iniquity that cannot be told, and whenever Brahmans, cows, gods and earth itself are in trouble, the gracious Lord assumes various (transcendent) forms and relieves the distress of the virtuous. (1—4)

दो०—असुर मारि थापहिं सुरन्ह राखहिं निज श्रुति सेतु।
जग बिस्तारहिं बिसद जस राम जन्म कर हेतु॥ १२१॥

"Killing the demons He reinstates the gods, preserves the bounds of propriety fixed by the Vedas, which represent His own breath, and diffuses His immaculate glory throughout the world. This is the motive of Śrī Rāma's descent. (121)

चौ०—सोइ जस गाइ भगत भव तरहीं। कृपासिंधु जन हित तनु धरहीं॥
राम जनम के हेतु अनेका। परम बिचित्र एक तें एका॥ १॥
जनम एक दुइ कहउँ बखानी। सावधान सुनु सुमति भवानी॥
द्वारपाल हरि के प्रिय दोऊ। जय अरु बिजय जान सब कोऊ॥ २॥
बिप्र श्राप तें दूनउ भाई। तामस असुर देह तिन्ह पाई॥
कनककसिपु अरु हाटकलोचन। जगत बिदित सुरपति मद मोचन॥ ३॥
बिजई समर बीर बिख्याता। धरि बराह बपु एक निपाता॥
होइ नरहरि दूसर पुनि मारा। जन प्रहलाद सुजस बिस्तारा॥ ४॥

"Singing this glory the devotees cross the ocean of mundane existence; it is for the sake of His devotees that the compassionate Lord bodies Himself forth. The motives of Śrī Rāma's birth are many, each more wonderful than the other. I will refer to one or two such births at some length; please listen attentively, O wise Bhavānī. Śrī Hari has two favourite gate-keepers, Jaya and Vijaya, who are known to everybody. Due to the curse of certain Brahmans (Sanaka and his three brothers) both these brothers were born in the accursed species of demons. One of them was known as Hiraṇyakaśipu

and the other as Hiraṇyākṣa. They became known throughout the universe as the tamers of the pride of Indra (the chief of gods) Both of them were celebrated heroes who came out victorious in battle. The Lord assumed the form of a Boar in order to kill one of the two brothers (viz., Hiranyākṣa); while bodying Himself forth as a Man-Lion, He killed the other (Hiraṇyakaśipu) and spread the fair renown of His devotee, Prahlāda (Hiraṇyakaśipu's son). (1—4)

दो०—भए निसाचर जाइ तेइ महाबीर बलवान ।
कुंभकरन रावन सुभट सुर बिजई जग जान ॥ १२२ ॥

"It is these two brothers that were born again as the powerful and most valiant Rākṣasas, Rāvana and Kumbhakarna, who were great warriors and, as all the world knows, conquered even gods. (122)

चौ०—मुकुत न भए हते भगवाना । तीनि जनम द्विज बचन प्रवाना ॥
एक बार तिन्ह के हित लागी । धरेउ सरीर भगत अनुरागी ॥ १ ॥
कस्यप अदिति तहाँ पितु माता । दसरथ कौसल्या बिख्याता ॥
एक कलप एहि बिधि अवतारा । चरित पवित्र किए संसारा ॥ २ ॥
एक कलप सुर देखि दुखारे । समर जलंधर सन सब हारे ॥
संभु कीन्ह संग्राम अपारा । दनुज महाबल मरइ न मारा ॥ ३ ॥
परम सती असुराधिप नारी । तेहिं बल ताहि न जितहिं पुरारी ॥ ४ ॥

"Even though slain by the Lord, the two brothers (Hiraṇyākṣa and Hiraṇyakaśipu) did not attain liberation, for the Brahmans had doomed them to three births. It was on their account that the Lover of the devotees bodied Himself forth on one occasion. In that birth Kaśyapa and Aditi were His parents, who were known by the names of Daśaratha and Kausalyā respectively. This was how in one Kalpa (round of creation) the Lord descended from heaven and performed purifying deeds on earth. In another Kalpa all the gods were worsted in their conflict with the demon Jalandhara. Seeing their distress Śambhu waged war against him, which knew no end, but the demon, who possessed a great might, could not be killed in spite of His best efforts. The wife of the demon chief was a most virtuous lady. Armed by her strength of character the demon could not be conquered even by the Vanquisher of Tripura. (1—4)

दो०—छल करि टारेउ तासु ब्रत प्रभु सुर कारज कीन्ह ।
जब तेहिं जानेउ मरम तब श्राप कोप करि दीन्ह ॥ १२३ ॥

"By a stratagem the Lord broke her vow of chastity and accomplished the purpose of the gods. When the lady discovered the trick, she cursed Him in her wrath. (123)

चौ०—तासु श्राप हरि दीन्ह प्रमाना । कौतुकनिधि कृपाल भगवाना ॥
तहाँ जलंधर रावन भयऊ । रन हति राम परम पद दयऊ ॥ १ ॥

एक जनम कर कारन एहा । जेहि लगि राम धरी नरदेहा ॥
प्रति अवतार कथा प्रभु केरी । सुनु मुनि बरनी कबिन्ह घनेरी ॥ २ ॥
नारद श्राप दीन्ह एक बारा । कलप एक तेहि लगि अवतारा ॥
गिरिजा चकित भईं सुनि बानी । नारद बिष्नुभगत पुनि ग्यानी ॥ ३ ॥
कारन कवन श्राप मुनि दीन्हा । का अपराध रमापति कीन्हा ॥
यह प्रसंग मोहि कहहु पुरारी । मुनि मन मोह आचरज भारी ॥ ४ ॥

"The sportive and gracious Lord accepted her curse. It was this Jalandhara who was reborn as Rāvaṇa in this latter Kalpa. Killing him in battle Śrī Rāma conferred on him the supreme state (final beatitude). This was the reason why Śrī Rāma assumed a human form in one particular birth. Hark, O Bharadwāja: the story of each birth of the Lord has been sung by poets in diverse ways. On one occasion Nārada cursed the Lord; this served as an excuse of His birth in one particular Kalpa." Girijā was taken aback to hear these words and said, "Nārada is a votary of God Viṣṇu and an enlightened soul too Wherefore did the sage pronounce a curse ? What offence had Lakṣmī's lord committed against him ? Tell me the whole story, O Slayer of the demon Tripura. It is very strange that the sage should have fallen a prey to delusion."

(1—4)

दो०—बोले बिहसि महेस तब ग्यानी मूढ़ न कोइ ।
जेहि जस रघुपति करहिं जब सो तस तेहि छन होइ ॥ १२४ (क) ॥

The great Lord Śiva then replied with a smile, "There is no one enlightened or deluded. Man instantly becomes what the Lord of Raghus wills him to be at a particular moment. (124 A)

सो०—कहउँ राम गुन गाथ भरद्वाज सादर सुनहु ।
भव भंजन रघुनाथ भजु तुलसी तजि मान मद ॥ १२४ (ख) ॥

Said Yājñavalkya, "I am going to recount the virtues of Rāma, O Bharadwāja; listen with a devout mind." Renouncing pride and intoxication, O Tulasīdāsa, adore the Lord of Raghus, who puts an end to metempsychosis. (124 B)

चौ०—हिमगिरि गुहा एक अति पावनि । बह समीप सुरसरी सुहावनि ॥
आश्रम परम पुनीत सुहावा । देखि देवरिषि मन अति भावा ॥ १ ॥
निरखि सैल सरि बिपिन बिभागा । भयउ रमापति पद अनुरागा ॥
सुमिरत हरिहि श्राप गति बाधी । सहज बिमल मन लागि समाधी ॥ २ ॥
मुनि गति देखि सुरेस डेराना । कामहि बोलि कीन्ह सनमाना ॥
सहित सहाय जाहु मम हेतू । चलेउ हरषि हियँ जलचरकेतू ॥ ३ ॥
सुनासीर मन महुँ असि त्रासा । चहत देवरिषि मम पुर बासा ॥
जे कामी लोलुप जग माहीं । कुटिल काक इव सबहि डेराहीं ॥ ४ ॥

"In the Himālaya mountains there was a most sacred cave, the beautiful heavenly stream (Gangā) flowed near by. The sight of this most holy and charming hermitage highly attracted the mind of the celestial sage Nārada. Seeing the mountain, the river and the forest glades, his heart developed

love for the feet of Lakṣmī's lord. The thought of Śrī Hari broke the spell of the curse* (pronounced by Dakṣa, which did not allow him to stay at one place), and his mind, which was naturally sinless, fell into a trance Seeing the sage's condition, Indra (the chief of gods) became apprehensive. Summoning the god of love, he received him with great honour and said, "For my sake go with your associates !" The god of love (who has a fish emblazoned on his standard) set out gladdened at heart Indra apprehended that the celestial sage sought to occupy his abode. Those who are lustful and grasping are afraid of everyone like the evil-minded crow. (1—4)

दो०—सूख हाड़ लै भाग सठ स्वान निरखि मृगराज ।
छीनि लेइ जनि जान जड़ तिमि सुरपतिहि न लाज ॥ १२५ ॥

Just as a foolish dog, on seeing a king of beasts, should run away with a dry bone, fearing in his crass ignorance lest the lion should rob him of it, Indra too in his shamelessness thought as above (125)

चौ०—तेहि आश्रमहिं मदन जब गयऊ । निज मायाँ बसंत निरमयऊ ॥
कुसुमित बिबिध बिटप बहुरंगा । कूजहिं कोकिल गुंजहिं भृंगा ॥ १ ॥
चली सुहावनि त्रिबिध बयारी । काम कृसानु बढ़ावनिहारी ॥
रंभादिक सुरनारि नबीना । सकल असमसर कला प्रबीना ॥ २ ॥
करहिं गान बहु तान तरंगा । बहुबिधि क्रीड़हिं पानि पतंगा ॥
देखि सहाय मदन हरषाना । कीन्हेसि पुनि प्रपंच बिधि नाना ॥ ३ ॥
काम कला कछु मुनिहि न ब्यापी । निज भयँ डरेउ मनोभव पापी ॥
सीम कि चाँपि सकइ कोउ तासू । बड़ रखवार रमापति जासू ॥ ४ ॥

When the god of love reached that hermitage, he created a semblance of the vernal season by his illusory power. Many-coloured blossoms appeared on the trees of different kinds; cuckoos sang and bees hummed. Delightful breezes, cool, soft and fragrant, blew, fanning the flame of passion. Rambhā and other heavenly damsels, who looked ever young and were all past masters in amorous sports, sang in undulating tones of various kinds and sported in many ways, ball in hand. The god of love was delighted to see his associates there and employed a variety of deceptive tricks. But his amorous devices had no effect on the sage. Guilty Cupid was now apprehensive of his own destruction. Can anyone dare to trespass the bounds of him who has the Lord of Lakṣmī as his great protector. (1—4)

दो०—सहित सहाय सभीत अति मानि हारि मन मैन ।
गहेसि जाइ मुनि चरन तब कहि सुठि आरत बैन ॥ १२६ ॥

In dire dismay the god of love with his accomplices acknowledged his defeat and clasped the sage's feet, addressing him in accents of deep humility. (126)

चौ०—भयउ न नारद मन कछु रोषा । कहि प्रिय बचन काम परितोषा ॥
नाइ चरन सिरु आयसु पाई । गयउ मदन तब सहित सहाई ॥ १ ॥

* For the cause of the curse see *Chaupai* 1 following *Dohā* 78 (p. 83).

मुनि सुसीलता आपनि करनी । सुरपति सभाँ जाइ सब बरनी ॥
सुनि सब कें मन अचरजु आवा । मुनिहि प्रसंसि हरिहि सिरु नावा ॥ २ ॥
तब नारद गवने सिव पाहीं । जिता काम अहमिति मन माहीं ॥
मार चरित संकरहि सुनाए । अतिप्रिय जानि महेस सिखाए ॥ ३ ॥
बार बार बिनवउँ मुनि तोही । जिमि यह कथा सुनायहु मोही ॥
तिमि जनि हरिहि सुनावहु कबहूँ । चलेहुँ प्रसंग दुराएहु तबहूँ ॥ ४ ॥

There was no anger in Nārada's mind; he reassured the god of love by addressing him in friendly terms Then, bowing his head at the sage's feet and obtaining his leave, Love retired with his accomplices Reaching the court of Indra (the chief of gods) he related his own doings, on the one hand, and the sage's clemency, on the other. Hearing the tale all were astonished: they extolled the sage and bowed their head to Hari. Then Nārada called on Śiva. he was proud of his victory over Love and told Him all Love's doings. Knowing him to be His most beloved friend, the great Lord Śiva admonished him as follows:—"O sage, I pray you again and again· never repeat this story to Hari as you have repeated it to me. Even if the topic ever comes up before Him, please hush it up." (1—4)

दो०—संभु दीन्ह उपदेस हित नहिं नारदहि सोहान ।
भरद्वाज कौतुक सुनहु हरि इच्छा बलवान ॥ १२७ ॥

Wholesome was the advice given by Śambhu; but it did not please Nārada. Bharadwāja, now hear what interesting thing happened. The will of Hari is predominant. (127)

चौ०—राम कीन्ह चाहहिं सोइ होई । करै अन्यथा अस नहिं कोई ॥
संभु बचन मुनि मन नहिं भाए । तब बिरंचि के लोक सिधाए ॥ १ ॥
एक बार करतल बर बीना । गावत हरि गुन गान प्रबीना ॥
छीरसिंधु गवने मुनिनाथा । जहँ बस श्रीनिवास श्रुतिमाथा ॥ २ ॥
हरषि मिले उठि रमानिकेता । बैठे आसन रिषिहिं समेता ॥
बोले बिहसि चराचर राया । बहुते दिनन कीन्हि मुनि दाया ॥ ३ ॥
काम चरित नारद सब भाषे । जद्यपि प्रथम बरजि सिवँ राखे ॥
अति प्रचंड रघुपति कै माया । जेहि न मोह अस को जग जाया ॥ ४ ॥

The will of Śrī Rāma alone prevails, there is no one who can alter it Śambhu's advice fell flat on the sage. Then he went to the abode of Brahmā (the Creator). Singing the glories of Śrī Hari, to the accompaniment of the excellent lute he had in his hand, the lord of sages, Nārada, who was skilled in music, once repaired to the ocean of milk, where dwells the abode of Lakṣmī, Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa, who is Vedānta (the crown of all Vedas) personified. The abode of Ramā (Lakṣmī) rose to meet him in great joy and shared His seat with the sage. The Lord of the entire creation, animate as well as inanimate, said with a smile, "It is after a long time that you have showed Me this favour, reverend sir." Nārada told Him all the doings of

Love, even though Śiva had already forbidden him to do so. Most formidable is the Māyā (deluding potency) of the Lord of Raghus. No one was ever born in this world, who is beyond its charm. (1—4)

दो०—रूख बदन करि बचन मृदु बोले श्रीभगवान ।
तुम्हरे सुमिरन तें मिटहिं मोह मार मद मान ॥ १२८ ॥

With an impassive look, yet in coaxing accents, said the Lord, "By your very thought self-delusion, lust, arrogance and pride disappear. (128)

चौ०—सुनु मुनि मोह होइ मन ताकें । ग्यान बिराग हृदय नहिं जाकें ॥
ब्रह्मचरज ब्रत रत मतिधीरा । तुम्हहि कि करइ मनोभव पीरा ॥ १ ॥
नारद कहेउ सहित अभिमाना । कृपा तुम्हारि सकल भगवाना ॥
करुनानिधि मन दीख बिचारी । उर अंकुरेउ गरब तरु भारी ॥ २ ॥
बेगि सो मैं डारिहउँ उखारी । पन हमार सेवक हितकारी ॥
मुनि कर हित मम कौतुक होई । अवसि उपाय करबि मैं सोई ॥ ३ ॥
तब नारद हरि पद सिर नाई । चले हृदयँ अहमिति अधिकाई ॥
श्रीपति निज माया तब प्रेरी । सुनहु कठिन करनी तेहि केरी ॥ ४ ॥

"Hark, O sage! the mind of him alone is susceptible to delusion, whose heart is devoid of wisdom and dispassion. You are steadfast in your vow of celibacy and resolute of mind, you can never be smitten with pangs of Love " Nārada replied with a feeling of pride, "Lord, it is all due to Your grace." The compassionate Lord pondered and saw that a huge tree of pride had sprouted in his heart. "I shall soon tear it up by roots, for it is My vow to serve the best interests of My servants. I must contrive some plan which may do good to the sage and serve as a diversion for Me." Then, bowing his head at the feet of Śrī Hari, Nārada departed. The pride in his heart had swelled. The Lord of Lakṣmī (the goddess of prosperity) then set His Māyā into operation. Now hear of her relentless doings. (1—4)

दो०—बिरचेउ मग महुँ नगर तेहिं सत जोजन बिस्तार ।
श्रीनिवासपुर तें अधिक रचना बिबिध प्रकार ॥ १२९ ॥

The Lord's Māyā (deluding potency) created on the way a city with an area of eight hundred square miles. The manifold architectural beauties of that city excelled even those of Viṣṇu's own capital (Vaikuṇṭha). (129)

चौ०—बसहिं नगर सुंदर नर नारी । जनु बहु मनसिज रति तनुधारी ॥
तेहिं पुर बसइ सीलनिधि राजा । अगनित हय गय सेन समाजा ॥ १ ॥
सत सुरेस सम बिभव बिलासा । रूप तेज बल नीति निवासा ॥
बिस्वमोहनी तासु कुमारी । श्री बिमोह जिसु रूपु निहारी ॥ २ ॥
सोइ हरिमाया सब गुन खानी । सोभा तासु कि जाइ बखानी ॥
करइ स्वयंबर सो नृपबाला । आए तहँ अगनित महिपाला ॥ ३ ॥

मुनि कौतुकी नगर तेहिं गयऊ । पुरबासिन्ह सब पूछत भयऊ ॥
सुनि सब चरित भूपगृहँ आए । करि पूजा नृप मुनि बैठाए ॥ ४ ॥

It was inhabited by graceful men and women, whom you would take to be so many incarnations of the god of love and his wife Rati. A king, Śīlanidhi by name, ruled over that city; he owned numberless horses, elephants and troops. He possessed the grandeur and luxury of a hundred Indras, and was a repository of grace, splendour, might and wisdom. He had a daughter, Viśwamohinī by name, whose beauty enraptured even Lakṣmī She was no other than Śrī Hari's own Māyā (enrapturing potency), the fountainhead of all virtues, who can describe her charm? The princess was going to marry by self-election, hence kings beyond number arrived there as suitors. The sportive sage (Nārada) entered the city and inquired everything from the people Hearing all that had been going on there, he wended his way to the king's palace. The king paid him homage and gave him a seat. (1—4)

दो०—आनि देखाई नारदहि भूपति राजकुमारि ।
कहहु नाथ गुन दोष सब एहि के हृदयँ बिचारि ॥ १३० ॥

The king brought and showed the princess to Nārada and said, "Tell me after mature thought all that is good or bad about her." (130)

चौ०—देखि रूप मुनि बिरति बिसारी । बड़ी बार लगि रहे निहारी ॥
लच्छन तासु बिलोकि भुलाने । हृदयँ हरष नहिं प्रगट बखाने ॥ १ ॥
जो एहि बरइ अमर सोइ होई । समरभूमि तेहि जीत न कोई ॥
सेवहिं सकल चराचर ताही । बरइ सीलनिधि कन्या जाही ॥ २ ॥
लच्छन सब बिचारि उर राखे । कछुक बनाइ भूप सन भाषे ॥
सुता सुलच्छन कहि नृप पाहीं । नारद चले सोच मन माहीं ॥ ३ ॥
करौं जाइ सोइ जतन बिचारी । जेहि प्रकार मोहि बरै कुमारी ॥
जप तप कछु न होइ तेहि काला । हे बिधि मिलइ कवन बिधि बाला ॥ ४ ॥

Seeing her beauty the sage forgot all about his dispassion and remained gazing on her for a long time When he read the auspicious marks on her body, he was lost in reverie. He was gladdened at heart, but he would not openly mention the happy characteristics "He who weds this girl," he said to himself, "shall become immortal; and no one shall be able to conquer him in battle. He whom Śīlanidhi's daughter selects for her lord shall be adored by the entire creation, both animate and inanimate." Having read these characteristics the sage kept them to himself, and mentioned a few fabricated ones to the king. Telling the king that his daughter was of good promise, Nārada left. He thought within himself, "Let me devise and try some means whereby the princess may choose me for her husband." He had no more zeal to practise Japa (muttering of sacred formulas) or austerity. "Good God, how am I to get the girl?" he said to himself. (1—4)

दो०—एहि अवसर चाहिअ परम सोभा रूप बिसाल ।
जो बिलोकि रीझै कुअँरि तब मेलै जयमाल ॥ १३१ ॥

"What is needed on this occasion is great personal charm and surpassing beauty, whereby the princess may be enamoured of me and place the wreath of victory round my neck," he continued. (131)

चौ०—हरि सन मागौं सुंदरताई। होइहि जात गहरु अति भाई॥
मोरें हित हरि सम नहिं कोऊ। एहि अवसर सहाय सोइ होऊ॥ १॥
बहुबिधि बिनय कीन्हि तेहि काला। प्रगटेउ प्रभु कौतुकी कृपाला॥
प्रभु बिलोकि मुनि नयन जुड़ाने। होइहि काजु हिएँ हरषाने॥ २॥
अति आरति कहि कथा सुनाई। करहु कृपा करि होहु सहाई॥
आपन रूप देहु प्रभु मोही। आन भाँति नहिं पावौं ओही॥ ३॥
जेहि बिधि नाथ होइ हित मोरा। करहु सो बेगि दास मैं तोरा॥
निज माया बल देखि बिसाला। हियँ हँसि बोले दीनदयाला॥ ४॥

"Let me ask Hari for a gift of beauty. But, alas! much time will be lost in going to Him Yet I have no such friend as Hari. let Him, therefore, come to my rescue at this juncture" Then Nārada prayed in manifold ways and lo! the sportive and merciful Lord appeared before him. The sight was soothing to the sage's eyes. He was glad at heart and felt assured that his object would be accomplished. In great humility he told the Lord all that had happened, and said, "Be gracious to me and be good enough to help me Lord, bestow on me Your own beauty, in no other way can I get possession of her. Speedily do that which may serve my best interests, I am Your own servant, my lord" Seeing the mighty power of His Māyā, the Lord, who is compassionate to the poor, smiled to himself and said — (1—4)

दो०—जेहि बिधि होइहि परम हित नारद सुनहु तुम्हार।
सोइ हम करब न आन कछु बचन न मृषा हमार॥ १३२॥

"Nārada, listen to Me; I shall do that alone which is good to you, and nothing else. My words can never be untrue. (132)

चौ०—कुपथ माग रुज ब्याकुल रोगी। बैद न देइ सुनहु मुनि जोगी॥
एहि बिधि हित तुम्हार मैं ठयऊ। कहि अस अंतरहित प्रभु भयऊ॥ १॥
माया बिबस भए मुनि मूढ़ा। समुझी नहिं हरि गिरा निगूढ़ा॥
गवने तुरत तहाँ रिषिराई। जहाँ स्वयंबर भूमि बनाई॥ २॥
निज निज आसन बैठे राजा। बहु बनाव करि सहित समाजा॥
मुनि मन हरष रूप अति मोरें। मोहि तजि आनहि बरिहि न भोरें॥ ३॥
मुनि हित कारन कृपानिधाना। दीन्ह कुरूप न जाइ बखाना॥
सो चरित्र लखि काहुँ न पावा। नारद जानि सबहिं सिर नावा॥ ४॥

"Hark, O contemplative ascetic! if a patient distracted by his malady asks for something which is harmful to him, the physician would not give it. In a like manner I have resolved on doing what is good to you." So saying, the Lord disappeared. Under the spell of His Māyā the sage was so mystified that he could not understand even such unambiguous words of Śrī Hari. The chief of seers hastened to the spot where the arena for the choice-marriage

had been prepared. Richly adorned, the royal suitors had occupied their respective seats, each with his retinue. The sage was glad at heart for he thought within himself, "My beauty is so surpassing that the princess will never commit the error of choosing for her husband anyone else than me" In the sage's own interest the gracious Lord had made him hideous beyond description. But no one could mark the change that had taken place in him; everyone knew him to be Nārada and greeted him as such (1—4)

दो०—रहे तहाँ दुइ रुद्र गन ते जानहिं सब भेउ।
बिप्रबेष देखत फिरहिं परम कौतुकी तेउ ॥ १३३ ॥

Two of Śiva's attendants too happened to be there They knew the whole secret and, disguised as Brahmans, went about seeing the fun. (133)

चौ०—जेहिं समाज बैठे मुनि जाई। हृदयँ रूप अहमिति अधिकाई॥
तहँ बैठे महेस गन दोऊ। बिप्रबेष गति लखइ न कोऊ॥ १ ॥
करहिं कूटि नारदहि सुनाई। नीकि दीन्हि हरि सुंदरताई॥
रीझिहि राजकुअँरि छबि देखी। इन्हहि बरिहि हरि जानि बिसेषी॥ २ ॥
मुनिहि मोह मन हाथ पराएँ। हँसहिं संभु गन अति सचु पाएँ॥
जदपि सुनहिं मुनि अटपटि बानी। समुझि न परइ बुद्धि भ्रम सानी॥ ३ ॥
काहुँ न लखा सो चरित बिसेषा। सो सरूप नृपकन्याँ देखा॥
मर्कट बदन भयंकर देही। देखत हृदयँ क्रोध भा तेही॥ ४ ॥

In the row where sat Nārada, exceedingly proud of his beauty, the two attendants of Maheśa too seated themselves. Being disguised as Brahmans they could not be detected. They flung sarcastic remarks at Nārada, saying, "Hari has given this man such excellent beauty that the princess will be enamoured to look at it and shall certainly choose him, taking him for Hari* Himself." The sage was under a spell of delusion, for his heart had been stolen by love. The attendants of Śiva felt amused at this and greatly enjoyed the fun Even though the sage heard their ironical talk, he could not follow it, his reason being clouded by infatuation. No one perceived this extraordinary phenomenon; the princess alone saw his ugly form. The moment she beheld his monkey-like face and frightful form she was filled with rage. (1—4)

दो०—सखीं संग लै कुअँरि तब चलि जनु राजमराल।
देखत फिरइ महीप सब कर सरोज जयमाल ॥ १३४ ॥

Accompanied by her girl companions the princess then glided as a swan. With a wreath of victory in her lotus hands she moved about surveying each of her royal suitors. (134)

चौ०—जेहि दिसि बैठे नारद फूली। सो दिसि तेहिं न बिलोकी भूली॥
पुनि पुनि मुनि उकसहिं अकुलाहीं। देखि दसा हर गन मुसुकाहीं॥ १ ॥

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* The word 'Hari' also means a monkey: the attendants of Śiva, therefore, indirectly hinted that the sage looked like a monkey.

धरि नृपतनु तहँ गयउ कृपाला । कुअँरि हरषि मेलेउ जयमाला ॥
दुलहिनि लै गे लच्छिनिवासा । नृपसमाज सब भयउ निरासा ॥ २ ॥
मुनि अति बिकल मोहँ मति नाठी । मनि गिरि गई छूटि जनु गाँठी ॥
तब हर गन बोले मुसुकाई । निज मुख मुकुर बिलोकहु जाई ॥ ३ ॥
अस कहि दोउ भागे भयँ भारी । बदन दीख मुनि बारि निहारी ॥
बेषु बिलोकि क्रोध अति बाढ़ा । तिन्हहि सराप दीन्ह अति गाढ़ा ॥ ४ ॥

She did not care to look even casually at the quarter in which Nārada sat elated with pride. Again and again the sage would raise himself and fidget about; the attendants of Hara smiled to see him in that state. The gracious Lord too went there in the form of a king; the princess joyfully placed the wreath of victory round His neck. The Lord of Lakṣmī carried off the bride to the despair of all assembled kings. The sage felt much perturbed, for infatuation had robbed the sage of his reason. He felt as if a gem had dropped from a loosened knot in the end of his garment. The attendants of Hara then smilingly said, "Just look at your face in a mirror." Uttering these words both ran away in great alarm and the sage looked at his reflection in water. His fury knew no bounds when he beheld his form; and he pronounced a terrible curse on the attendants of Śiva — (1—4)

दो०—होहु निसाचर जाइ तुम्ह कपटी पापी दोउ ।
हँसेहु हमहि सो लेहु फल बहुरि हँसेहु मुनि कोउ ॥ १३५ ॥

"O you sinful imposters, go and be reborn as demons. You mocked me; therefore, reap its reward. Mock again a sage, if you dare." (135)

चौ०—पुनि जल दीख रूप निज पावा । तदपि हृदयँ संतोष न आवा ॥
फरकत अधर कोप मन माहीं । सपदि चले कमलापति पाहीं ॥ १ ॥
देहउँ श्राप कि मरिहउँ जाई । जगत मोरि उपहास कराई ॥
बीचहिं पंथ मिले दनुजारी । संग रमा सोइ राजकुमारी ॥ २ ॥
बोले मधुर बचन सुरसाईं । मुनि कहँ चले बिकल की नाईं ॥
सुनत बचन उपजा अति क्रोधा । माया बस न रहा मन बोधा ॥ ३ ॥
पर संपदा सकहु नहिं देखी । तुम्हरें इरिषा कपट बिसेषी ॥
मथत सिंधु रुद्रहि बौरायहु । सुरन्ह प्रेरि बिष पान करायहु ॥ ४ ॥

Looking again in water, he saw that he had regained his real form, yet his heart found no solace. His lips quivered and there was indignation in his heart. At once he proceeded to where the Lord of Lakṣmī was. "I shall either curse Him or die at His door," he said to himself, "seeing that He has made me a butt of ridicule throughout the world." The terror of the demons, Śrī Hari, met him right on the way. He was accompanied by Goddess Ramā and the princess referred to above. The lord of immortals spoke in gentle tones, "To what destination, holy sir, are you betaking yourself like one distracted ?" As soon as he heard these words Nārada was filled with rage. Dominated as he was by Māyā, there was no reason left in him. He said, "You cannot bear to look upon the good fortune of others. You are richly endowed with jealousy

and fraud. While churning the ocean You drove Rudra mad and inciting Him through the gods You made Him quaff the poison. (1—4)

दो०—असुर सुरा बिष संकरहि आपु रमा मनि चारु ।
स्वारथ साधक कुटिल तुम्ह सदा कपट ब्यवहारु ॥ १३६ ॥

"Apportioning intoxicating liquor to the demons and poison to Śankara, You appropriated Ramā and the lovely gem (Kaustubha) to Yourself You have ever been selfish and perverse, and treacherous in Your dealings. (136)

चौ०—परम स्वतंत्र न सिर पर कोई । भावइ मनहि करहु तुम्ह सोई ॥
भलेहि मंद मंदेहि भल करहू । बिसमय हरष न हियँ कछु धरहू ॥ १ ॥
डहकि डहकि परिचेहु सब काहू । अति असंक मन सदा उछाहू ॥
करम सुभासुभ तुम्हहि न बाधा । अब लगि तुम्हहि न काहूँ साधा ॥ २ ॥
भले भवन अब बायन दीन्हा । पावहुगे फल आपन कीन्हा ॥
बंचेहु मोहि जवनि धरि देहा । सोइ तनु धरहु श्राप मम एहा ॥ ३ ॥
कपि आकृति तुम्ह कीन्हि हमारी । करिहहिं कीस सहाय तुम्हारी ॥
मम अपकार कीन्ह तुम्ह भारी । नारि बिरहँ तुम्ह होब दुखारी ॥ ४ ॥

"You are absolutely independent and subordinate to none; therefore You do whatever pleases Your mind. You debase a good soul and redeem a vile person and neither rejoice nor grieve over it. Deceiving everyone You have become habituated to such tricks. You entertain no fear and are always zealous in pursuing Your object. Good and evil deeds do not come in Your way, no one has so far been able to correct You You have this time played with fire and shall reap what You have sown. Take that very form in which You have imposed upon me. this is my curse. You made me look like a monkey; therefore You shall have monkeys for Your helpmates. And as You have grievously wronged me, so shall You suffer the pangs of separation from Your wife" (1—4)

दो०—श्राप सीस धरि हरषि हियँ प्रभु बहु बिनती कीन्हि ।
निज माया कै प्रबलता करषि कृपानिधि लीन्हि ॥ १३७ ॥

Gladly accepting the curse, the compassionate Lord made many entreaties to the sage, and withdrew the irresistible charm of His Māyā (137)

चौ०—जब हरि माया दूरि निवारी । नहिं तहँ रमा न राजकुमारी ॥
तब मुनि अति सभीत हरि चरना । गहे पाहि प्रनतारति हरना ॥ १ ॥
मृषा होउ मम श्राप कृपाला । मम इच्छा कह दीनदयाला ॥
मैं दुर्बचन कहे बहुतेरे । कह मुनि पाप मिटिहिं किमि मेरे ॥ २ ॥
जपहु जाइ संकर सत नामा । होइहि हृदयँ तुरत बिश्रामा ॥
कोउ नहिं सिव समान प्रिय मोरें । असि परतीति तजहु जनि भोरें ॥ ३ ॥
जेहि पर कृपा न करहिं पुरारी । सो न पाव मुनि भगति हमारी ॥
अस उर धरि महि बिचरहु जाई । अब न तुम्हहि माया निअराई ॥ ४ ॥

When Śrī Hari lifted the spell of His Māyā, there was neither Ramā nor the princess to be seen by His side In dire dismay the sage then clasped the feet of Hari and said, "O Reliever of the distress of the suppliant, save me! O gracious lord! let my curse prove ineffectual." "It was My will," replied the Lord, who is so merciful to the humble. "I poured many abuses at You," the sage repeated, "how shall my sins be expiated?" "Go and repeat the names of Śankara a hundred times; your heart will be disburdened at once No one is so dear to Me as Śiva· never give up this belief even by mistake. O sage, he who does not earn the good-will of Śiva shall never attain true devotion to Me. Bearing this in mind, go and perambulate the globe My Māyā shall haunt you no more" (1—4)

दो०—बहु बिधि मुनिहि प्रबोधि प्रभु तब भए अंतरधान ।
सत्यलोक नारद चले करत राम गुन गान ॥ १३८ ॥

Having thus reassured the sage, the Lord then disappeared; while Nārada proceeded to Satyaloka (the seventh paradise, the abode of Brahmā) chanting Śrī Rāma's praises as he went (138)

चौ०—हर गन मुनिहि जात पथ देखी । बिगतमोह मन हरष बिसेषी ॥
अति सभीत नारद पहिं आए । गहि पद आरत बचन सुनाए ॥ १ ॥
हर गन हम न बिप्र मुनिराया । बड़ अपराध कीन्ह फल पाया ॥
श्राप अनुग्रह करहु कृपाला । बोले नारद दीनदयाला ॥ २ ॥
निसिचर जाइ होहु तुम्ह दोऊ । बैभव बिपुल तेज बल होऊ ॥
भुजबल बिस्व जितब तुम्ह जहिआ । धरिहहिं बिष्नु मनुज तनु तहिआ ॥ ३ ॥
समर मरन हरि हाथ तुम्हारा । होइहहु मुकुत न पुनि संसारा ॥
चले जुगल मुनि पद सिर नाई । भए निसाचर कालहि पाई ॥ ४ ॥

When the attendants of Śiva saw the sage moving along the road free from delusion and greatly delighted at heart, they approached him in great alarm and, clasping his feet, spoke to him in great humility, "We are servants of Śiva and no Brahmans, O great sage; we committed a great sin and have reaped its fruit. Now rid us of the curse, O benevolent sage" Nārada, who was full of compassion to the humble, replied, "Both of you go and take the form of demons. You shall possess an enormous fortune, grandeur and strength. When you have subdued the universe by the might of your arm, God Viṣṇu shall take a human form. Dying at His hands in battle, you shall be liberated and shall never be reborn." Bowing their head at the sage's feet, both departed and were reborn as demons in due course. (1—4)

दो०—एक कलप एहि हेतु प्रभु लीन्ह मनुज अवतार ।
सुर रंजन सज्जन सुखद हरि भंजन भुबि भार ॥ १३९ ॥

In one Kalpa (round of creation) it was for this reason that Lord Śrī Hari assumed a human form. It is His vow to gladden the gods, to delight the virtuous and to ease the earth of its burden. (139)

चौ०—एहि बिधि जनम करम हरि केरे । सुंदर सुखद बिचित्र घनेरे ॥
कलप कलप प्रति प्रभु अवतरहीं । चारु चरित नानाबिधि करहीं ॥ १ ॥
तब तब कथा मुनीसन्ह गाई । परम पुनीत प्रबंध बनाई ॥
बिबिध प्रसंग अनूप बखाने । करहिं न सुनि आचरजु सयाने ॥ २ ॥
हरि अनंत हरिकथा अनंता । कहहिं सुनहिं बहु बिधि सब संता ॥
रामचंद्र के चरित सुहाए । कलप कोटि लगि जाहिं न गाए ॥ ३ ॥
यह प्रसंग मैं कहा भवानी । हरिमायाँ मोहहिं मुनि ग्यानी ॥
प्रभु कौतुकी प्रनत हितकारी । सेवत सुलभ सकल दुख हारी ॥ ४ ॥

Thus Śrī Hari's births and exploits are many, they are all charming, delightful and marvellous. In every cycle of creation the Lord manifests Himself and enacts lovely sports of various kinds, and the great sages have on each such occasion sung His story in most sacred strains, relating wonderful anecdotes of diverse kinds, hearing which the wise marvel not Infinite is Śrī Hari and infinite are His stories, each saint sings and hears them in divergent ways. The lovely sports of Rāmachandra cannot be sung even in crores of Kalpas This episode, O Bhavānī, has been narrated by me in order to show that even enlightened sages are deluded by Śrī Hari's Māyā. The Lord is sportive and a friend of the suppliant; He is easy to serve and rids one of all sorrows (1—4)

सो०—सुर नर मुनि कोउ नाहिं जेहि न मोह माया प्रबल ।
अस बिचारि मन माहिं भजिअ महामाया पतिहि ॥ १४० ॥

There is no god, man or sage whom Śrī Hari's powerful Māyā cannot infatuate. Bearing this in mind, one should adore the Lord of this great Māyā. (140)

चौ०—अपर हेतु सुनु सैलकुमारी । कहउँ बिचित्र कथा बिस्तारी ॥
जेहि कारन अज अगुन अरूपा । ब्रह्म भयउ कोसलपुर भूपा ॥ १ ॥
जो प्रभु बिपिन फिरत तुम्ह देखा । बंधु समेत धरें मुनिबेषा ॥
जासु चरित अवलोकि भवानी । सती सरीर रहिहु बौरानी ॥ २ ॥
अजहुँ न छाया मिटति तुम्हारी । तासु चरित सुनु भ्रम रुज हारी ॥
लीला कीन्हि जो तेहिं अवतारा । सो सब कहिहउँ मति अनुसारा ॥ ३ ॥
भरद्वाज सुनि संकर बानी । सकुचि सप्रेम उमा मुसुकानी ॥
लगे बहुरि बरनै बृषकेतू । सो अवतार भयउ जेहि हेतू ॥ ४ ॥

Hear, O daughter of the mountain-king, another reason why the unbegotten, unqualified and formless Brahma became king of Ayodhyā. I shall relate at length the marvellous story connected with it. The Lord whom you saw roaming in the forest with His brother (Lakṣmaṇa) in the garb of hermits, and whose doings drove you mad in the form of Satī to such an extent that the shadow of that madness haunts you even to this day,—hear His exploits, which serve as a cure for the disease of delusion. The sportive deeds that were performed by the Lord in that birth, I shall relate them all to the best of My talents. Hearing Śankara's words, O Bharadwāja, Umā blushed and smiled with love. Śiva (who has a bull emblazoned on His standard) then began to relate the cause of the Lord's descent on that particular occasion. (1—4)

दो०—सो मैं तुम्ह सन कहउँ सबु सुनु मुनीस मन लाइ ।
राम कथा कलि मल हरनि मंगल करनि सुहाइ ॥ १४१ ॥

I proceed to tell you all about it, O Bharadwāja, listen attentively. The story of Śrī Rāma wipes out all the impurities of the Kali age, brings forth all blessings and is most charming. (141)

चौ०—स्वायंभू मनु अरु सतरूपा । जिन्ह तें भै नरसृष्टि अनूपा ॥
दंपति धरम आचरन नीका । अजहुँ गाव श्रुति जिन्ह कै लीका ॥ १ ॥
नृप उत्तानपाद सुत तासू । ध्रुव हरिभगत भयउ सुत जासू ॥
लघु सुत नाम प्रियब्रत ताही । बेद पुरान प्रसंसहिं जाही ॥ २ ॥
देवहूति पुनि तासु कुमारी । जो मुनि कर्दम कै प्रिय नारी ॥
आदिदेव प्रभु दीनदयाला । जठर धरेउ जेहिं कपिल कृपाला ॥ ३ ॥
सांख्य सास्त्र जिन्ह प्रगट बखाना । तत्त्व बिचार निपुन भगवाना ॥
तेहिं मनु राज कीन्ह बहु काला । प्रभु आयसु सब बिधि प्रतिपाला ॥ ४ ॥

Swāyambhuva* Manu had Śatarūpā as wife; of them was born this human race, peerless in God's creation. The piety and conduct of the pair were excellent, the standard of morality set up by them is sung by the Vedas even to this day. Their son was King Uttānapāda, who begot the celebrated devotee of Śrī Hari, Dhruva. Manu's younger son was known as Priyavrata, who is mentioned with praise by the Vedas and the Purānas They had a daughter too, Devahūti by name, who was the favourite consort of the sage Kardama, and who bore in her womb the all-powerful and benevolent Lord Kapila, the primal divinity, who is compassionate to the humble and who openly expounded the philosophy of Sānkhya, an adept as He was in the enquiry after the ultimate principles. The said Manu ruled for a long period and followed the Lord's commandments (in the form of the scriptural ordinance) in every way. (1—4)

सो०—होइ न बिषय बिराग भवन बसत भा चौथपन ।
हृदयँ बहुत दुख लाग जनम गयउ हरिभगति बिनु ॥ १४२ ॥

"I have reached the fourth stage of my life (old age) while I am still living under the roof of my house (as a householder), but I have not yet lost my relish for the pleasures of sense," he said to himself. He felt sore distressed at heart that his life had been wasted without devotion to Śrī Hari. (142)

चौ०—बरबस राज सुतहि तब दीन्हा । नारि समेत गवन बन कीन्हा ॥
तीरथ बर नैमिष बिख्याता । अति पुनीत साधक सिधि दाता ॥ १ ॥

* So-called because he was born of Swayambhū (the self-born Brahmā). It is stated in the Purāṇas that the Creator divided himself into two halves, one of which was a male and the other a female. The former was known by the name of Swāyambhuva and the other as Śatarūpā. He was the first of the fourteen Manus who rule over God's creation in succession, each holding office for $71\frac{1}{2}$ Chaturyugas or repetitions of the four Yugas.

बसहिं तहाँ मुनि सिद्ध समाजा । तहँ हियँ हरषि चलेउ मनु राजा ॥
पंथ जात सोहहिं मतिधीरा । ग्यान भगति जनु धरें सरीरा ॥ २ ॥
पहुँचे जाइ धेनुमति तीरा । हरषि नहाने निरमल नीरा ॥
आए मिलन सिद्ध मुनि ग्यानी । धरम धुरंधर नृपरिषि जानी ॥ ३ ॥
जहँ जहँ तीरथ रहे सुहाए । मुनिन्ह सकल सादर करवाए ॥
कृस सरीर मुनिपट परिधाना । सत समाज नित सुनहिं पुराना ॥ ४ ॥

Manu then perforce resigned the throne to his son and departed for the forest with his wife. Pre-eminent of all holy places is the celebrated Naimiṣāranya (the modern Nimsar in Oudh), which is most sacred and bestows success on those striving for realization. Multitudes of sages and adepts lived there. Glad of heart, King Manu proceeded to that place. Passing along the road, the king and queen of resolute mind looked like incarnations of spiritual wisdom and devotion respectively On reaching the bank of the Gomatī they bathed with delight in the limpid stream. Adepts and enlightened sages came to see him, recognizing in the royal sage a champion of virtue. The sages reverently took them to all holy and lovely spots that were scattered here and there. With emaciated bodies and clad in hermits' robes they daily listened to the Purānas in the assembly of saints.

(1—4)

दो०—द्वादस अच्छर मंत्र पुनि जपहिं सहित अनुराग ।
बासुदेव पद पंकरुह दंपति मन अति लाग ॥ १४३ ॥

They further devoutly repeated the twelve-lettered formula (ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय). Their mind was fondly devoted to the lotus feet of Lord Vāsudeva (the all-pervading Viṣṇu). (143)

चौ०—करहिं अहार साक फल कंदा । सुमिरहिं ब्रह्म सच्चिदानंदा ॥
पुनि हरि हेतु करन तप लागे । बारि अधार मूल फल त्यागे ॥ १ ॥
उर अभिलाष निरंतर होई । देखिअ नयन परम प्रभु सोई ॥
अगुन अखंड अनंत अनादी । जेहि चिंतहिं परमारथबादी ॥ २ ॥
नेति नेति जेहि बेद निरूपा । निजानंद निरुपाधि अनूपा ॥
संभु बिरंचि बिष्नु भगवाना । उपजहिं जासु अंस तें नाना ॥ ३ ॥
ऐसेउ प्रभु सेवक बस अहई । भगत हेतु लीलातनु गहई ॥
जौं यह बचन सत्य श्रुति भाषा । तौ हमार पूजिहि अभिलाषा ॥ ४ ॥

They lived on vegetables, fruits and roots and meditated on Brahma (the Absolute), who is truth, consciousness and bliss combined. Again, they started undergoing penance for the sake of Śrī Hari, giving up roots and fruits for water alone. Their heart ever clamoured, "Let us see with our eyes that supreme Lord who is without attributes, without parts and without beginning or end, who is contemplated upon by the exponents of the highest reality, whom the Vedas describe in negative terms such as 'Not this, not this', who is bliss itself, unconditioned and without comparison, and from a particle of whose being emanate a number of Śambhus, Virañchis and Viṣṇus." Even such a Lord is

subordinate to the will of His devotees and assumes for their sake a form suitable for sport. If the above utterance of the Vedas is true, our desire will be surely accomplished. (1—4)

दो०—एहि बिधि बीते बरष षट सहस बारि आहार ।
संबत सप्त सहस्र पुनि रहे समीर अधार ॥ १४४ ॥

In this way six thousand years elapsed even while they lived on water. Then for another seven millennia they lived on air alone. (144)

चौ०—बरष सहस दस त्यागेउ सोऊ । ठाढ़े रहे एक पद दोऊ ॥
बिधि हरि हर तप देखि अपारा । मनु समीप आए बहु बारा ॥ १ ॥
मागहु बर बहु भाँति लोभाए । परम धीर नहिं चलहिं चलाए ॥
अस्थिमात्र होइ रहे सरीरा । तदपि मनाग मनहिं नहिं पीरा ॥ २ ॥
प्रभु सर्बग्य दास निज जानी । गति अनन्य तापस नृप रानी ॥
मागु मागु बरु भै नभ बानी । परम गभीर कृपामृत सानी ॥ ३ ॥
मृतक जिआवनि गिरा सुहाई । श्रवन रंध्र होइ उर जब आई ॥
हृष्टपुष्ट तन भए सुहाए । मानहुँ अबहिं भवन ते आए ॥ ४ ॥

For ten thousand years they refused to inhale even air (*i e.,* held their breath) and remained standing on one leg. Beholding their great penance Brahmā, Hari and Hara repeatedly called on Manu and tempted him in many ways, saying "Ask for a boon." But the king and queen were most resolute and did not swerve in spite of the deities' efforts to deflect them from their course. Although their frame had been reduced to a mere skeleton, there was not the least anguish in their heart. The omniscient Lord now recognized the king and queen as His own servants. The ascetic couple solely depended on Him. In the meantime a most deep voice thundered from heaven, "Ask, ask for a boon." The voice was steeped in the nectar of compassion and was so charming that it infused life into the dead. Entering through the cavity of the ears when it reached their very heart, they found their body attractive, animated and robust as before, as if they had just returned from home. (1—4)

दो०—श्रवन सुधा सम बचन सुनि पुलक प्रफुल्लित गात ।
बोले मनु करि दंडवत प्रेम न हृदयँ समात ॥ १४५ ॥

As the royal couple heard these words, which were delightful to the ear as nectar itself, the hair on their body bristled and a thrill ran through their limbs. Then, falling prostrate on the ground and with his heart overflowing with love, Manu spoke :— (145)

चौ०—सुनु सेवक सुरतरु सुरधेनू । बिधि हरि हर बंदित पद रेनू ॥
सेवत सुलभ सकल सुख दायक । प्रनतपाल सचराचर नायक ॥ १ ॥
जौं अनाथ हित हम पर नेहू । तौ प्रसन्न होइ यह बर देहू ॥
जो सरूप बस सिव मन माहीं । जेहि कारन मुनि जतन कराहीं ॥ २ ॥

जो भुसुंडि मन मानस हंसा । सगुन अगुन जेहि निगम प्रसंसा ॥
देखहिं हम सो रूप भरि लोचन । कृपा करहु प्रनतारति मोचन ॥ ३ ॥
दंपति बचन परम प्रिय लागे । मृदुल बिनीत प्रेम रस पागे ॥
भगत बछल प्रभु कृपानिधाना । बिस्वबास प्रगटे भगवाना ॥ ४ ॥

"Listen, O Lord ! You are a wish-yielding tree and a cow of plenty to Your servants. The dust below Your feet is adored by Brahmā, Hari and Hara. You are easy to serve and a fountain of all blessings. You are the protector of the suppliant and the lord of all creation, both animate and inanimate. O friend of the forlorn, if You have any affection for us, be pleased to grant this boon to us. The form which dwells in Śiva's heart and is sought by sages, which sports like a swan in the lake of Bhuśuṇḍi's mind and is glorified by the Vedas as both with and without attributes,—be gracious to us and let us feast our eyes on that form. O Reliever of the distress of the suppliant" The soft and humble words of the royal couple, steeped as they were in the nectar of love, were liked by the Lord very much. Full of affection for His devotees and a storehouse of compassion, the all-powerful Lord, who pervades the whole universe, manifested Himself. (1—4)

दो०—नील सरोरुह नील मनि नील नीरधर स्याम ।
लाजहिं तन सोभा निरखि कोटि कोटि सत काम ॥ १४६ ॥

Billions and millions of Loves blushed to behold the elegance of His swarthy form, which resembled a blue lotus (in the softness of its touch), a sapphire (in its gloss) and a dark cloud (in its freshness). (146)

चौ०—सरद मयंक बदन छबि सींवा । चारु कपोल चिबुक दर ग्रीवा ॥
अधर अरुन रद सुंदर नासा । बिधु कर निकर बिनिंदक हासा ॥ १ ॥
नव अंबुज अंबक छबि नीकी । चितवनि ललित भावँती जी की ॥
भृकुटि मनोज चाप छबि हारी । तिलक ललाट पटल दुतिकारी ॥ २ ॥
कुंडल मकर मुकुट सिर भ्राजा । कुटिल केस जनु मधुप समाजा ॥
उर श्रीबत्स रुचिर बनमाला । पदिक हार भूषन मनिजाला ॥ ३ ॥
केहरि कंधर चारु जनेऊ । बाहु बिभूषन सुंदर तेऊ ॥
करि कर सरिस सुभग भुजदंडा । कटि निषंग कर सर कोदंडा ॥ ४ ॥

His countenance, which resembled the autumnal full moon, was the very perfection of beauty. Lovely were His cheeks and chin and His neck resembled the conch-shell in its spiral shape His ruddy lips, teeth and nose were charming. His smile put to shame the rays of the moon. His eyes possessed the exquisite beauty of fresh-blown lotuses and His lovely glance captivated the heart. His eyebrows stole the beauty of Love's bow and a sectarian mark shone on His forehead. Fish-shaped ear-rings hung from his ear-lobes and a crown adorned His head. His curly locks looked like a swarm of bees. His breast was marked by a curl of hair and adorned with a beautiful wreath of sylvan flowers, a string of precious stones and other jewelled ornaments. His strong and well-built neck resembled that of a lion and the lovely sacred

thread was suspended from it. His long beautiful arms resembled the trunk of an elephant. The ornaments adorning them were also charming. A quiver was tied to His waist and His hands bore an arrow and a bow. (1—4)

दो०—तड़ित बिनिंदक पीत पट उदर रेख बर तीनि।
नाभि मनोहर लेति जनु जमुन भवँर छबि छीनि ॥ १४७ ॥

His yellow robes put to shame streaks of lightning and His belly had three folds; while His attractive navel robbed, as it were, the eddies on the Yamunā of their beauty. (147)

चौ०—पद राजीव बरनि नहिं जाहीं। मुनि मन मधुप बसहिं जेन्ह माहीं ॥
बाम भाग सोभति अनुकूला। आदिसक्ति छबिनिधि जगमूला ॥ १ ॥
जासु अंस उपजहिं गुनखानी। अगनित लच्छि उमा ब्रह्मानी ॥
भृकुटि बिलास जासु जग होई। राम बाम दिसि सीता सोई ॥ २ ॥
छबिसमुद्र हरि रूप बिलोकी। एकटक रहे नयन पट रोकी ॥
चितवहिं सादर रूप अनूपा। तृप्ति न मानहिं मनु सतरूपा ॥ ३ ॥
हरष बिबस तन दसा भुलानी। परे दंड इव गहि पद पानी ॥
सिर परसे प्रभु निज कर कंजा। तुरत उठाए करुनापुंजा ॥ ४ ॥

His lotus feet, which attract the minds of sages like so many bees, were beyond description. On His left side shone His primordial energy, Sītā, who is ever devoted to Him, and who is a storehouse of beauty and the source of the universe. Sītā, who stood to the left of Śrī Rāma, was the same from a fragment of whose being emanate countless Lakṣmīs, Umās amd Brahmāṇīs (Saraswatīs), all mines of virtues, and the mere play of whose eyebrows brings the cosmos into existence. On the form of Śrī Hari, the ocean of beauty, Manu and Śatarūpā gazed intently with unblinking eyes. That incomparable beauty they looked on with reverence and would not feel sated with it. Overcome with joy they lost consciousness of their body and fell flat on the ground, clasping His feet with their hands. The gracious Lord touched their heads with His own lotus hands and lifted them up at once. (1—4)

दो०—बोले कृपानिधान पुनि अति प्रसन्न मोहि जानि।
मागहु बर जोइ भाव मन महादानि अनुमानि ॥ १४८ ॥

The compassionate Lord then said, "Knowing that I am highly pleased with you and recognizing Me as a great donor, ask whatever boon you will." (148)

चौ०—सुनि प्रभु बचन जोरि जुग पानी। धरि धीरजु बोले मृदु बानी ॥
नाथ देखि पद कमल तुम्हारे। अब पूरे सब काम हमारे ॥ १ ॥
एक लालसा बड़ि उर माहीं। सुगम अगम कहि जाति सो नाहीं ॥
तुम्हहि देत अति सुगम गोसाईं। अगम लाग मोहि निज कृपनाईं ॥ २ ॥

जथा दरिद्र बिबुधतरु पाई । बहु संपति मागत सकुचाई ॥
तासु प्रभाउ जान नहिं सोई । तथा हृदयँ मम संसय होई ॥ ३ ॥
सो तुम्ह जानहु अंतरजामी । पुरवहु मोर मनोरथ स्वामी ॥
सकुच बिहाइ मागु नृप मोही । मोरें नहिं अदेय कछु तोही ॥ ४ ॥

On hearing the words of the Lord, Manu joined his palms and summoning courage spoke in soft accents, "Now that we have seen Your lotus feet, all our desires have been fulfilled. Yet one ardent longing still lingers in my heart It is easy of accomplishment and at the same time hard to attain, hence it cannot be expressed. O Lord, it is easy for You to grant it, but due to my wretched condition it appears to me so hard to attain. Just as a pauper who has found a wish-yielding tree feels shy in asking for abundant wealth, little realizing its glory, even so my heart is possessed by doubt. Being the witness of all hearts, You know my mind, therefore, O my master, grant my desire." "O king, ask of Me unreservedly, there is nothing which I would not give you." (1—4)

दो०—दानि सिरोमनि कृपानिधि नाथ कहउँ सतिभाउ ।
चाहउँ तुम्हहि समान सुत प्रभु सन कवन दुराउ ॥ १४९ ॥

"O crest-jewel of donors, O gracious lord, I tell You my sincere wish· I would have a son like You. I can have nothing to conceal from You." (149)

चौ०—देखि प्रीति सुनि बचन अमोले । एवमस्तु करुनानिधि बोले ॥
आपु सरिस खोजौं कहँ जाई । नृप तव तनय होब मैं आई ॥ १ ॥
सतरूपहि बिलोकि कर जोरें । देबि मागु बरु जो रुचि तोरें ॥
जो बरु नाथ चतुर नृप मागा । सोइ कृपाल मोहि अति प्रिय लागा ॥ २ ॥
प्रभु परंतु सुठि होति ढिठाई । जदपि भगत हित तुम्हहि सोहाई ॥
तुम्ह ब्रह्मादि जनक जग स्वामी । ब्रह्म सकल उर अंतरजामी ॥ ३ ॥
अस समुझत मन संसय होई । कहा जो प्रभु प्रवान पुनि सोई ॥
जे निज भगत नाथ तव अहहीं । जो सुख पावहिं जो गति लहहीं ॥ ४ ॥

On seeing his love and hearing his invaluable words, the compassionate Lord said, "Amen. But where shall I go to find My equal ? I Myself, O king, shall be a son to you." Then, seeing Śatarūpā with her hands still folded, He said, "O good lady, ask whatever boon you please." "O gracious Lord, the boon which the clever king has just asked has appealed to me much. But it is great presumption, my Lord, even though such presumption is liked by You, O friend of the devotees. You are the progenitor even of Brahmā and other gods, the lord of the universe and the Supreme Being who dwells within the heart of all. Realizing this, my mind is filled with doubt, but what You have said is infallible. O my master, the bliss that is enjoyed and the goal that is reached by Your own devotees,— (1—4)

दो०—सोइ सुख सोइ गति सोइ भगति सोइ निज चरन सनेहु ।
सोइ बिबेक सोइ रहनि प्रभु हमहि कृपा करि देहु ॥ १५० ॥

"Grant me in Your mercy, O Lord, that very bliss, the same destiny, the same devotion, the same attachment to Your feet, the same insight and the same mode of living" (150)

चौ०—सुनि मृदु गूढ़ रुचिर बर रचना । कृपासिंधु बोले मृदु बचना ॥
जो कछु रुचि तुम्हरे मन माहीं । मैं सो दीन्ह सब संसय नाहीं ॥ १ ॥
मातु बिबेक अलौकिक तोरें । कबहुँ न मिटिहि अनुग्रह मोरें ॥
बंदि चरन मनु कहेउ बहोरी । अवर एक बिनती प्रभु मोरी ॥ २ ॥
सुत बिषइक तव पद रति होऊ । मोहि बड़ मूढ़ कहै किन कोऊ ॥
मनि बिनु फनि जिमि जल बिनु मीना । मम जीवन तिमि तुम्हहि अधीना ॥ ३ ॥
अस बरु मागि चरन गहि रहेऊ । एवमस्तु करुनानिधि कहेऊ ॥
अब तुम्ह मम अनुसासन मानी । बसहु जाइ सुरपति रजधानी ॥ ४ ॥

Hearing the soft, pregnant, charming and excellent speech of Śatarūpā, the gracious Lord gently replied, "Whatever desire you cherish in your mind I have granted; you should have no doubt about it. Mother, by My grace your uncommon wisdom shall never fail." Bowing at His feet, Manu again said, "Lord, I have one more request to make. Let me have attachment to Your feet, of the same type as one has for a son, no matter if anyone calls me a big fool. Just as a snake cannot live without the gem on its hood and a fish without water, even so let my life be dependent on You (let me not survive without You) Asking this boon, the king remained clasping the Lord's feet till the All-merciful said, "Let it be so. Now, obeying My command go and dwell in the capital of Indra (the chief of gods). (1—4)

सो०—तहँ करि भोग बिसाल तात गएँ कछु काल पुनि ।
होइहहु अवध भुआल तब मैं होब तुम्हार सुत ॥ १५१ ॥

"Having enjoyed extensive enjoyments there you shall, after some time, be born as king of Ayodhyā, then, dear father, I will be your son. (151)

चौ०—इच्छामय नरबेष सँवारें । होइहउँ प्रगट निकेत तुम्हारें ॥
अंसन्ह सहित देह धरि ताता । करिहउँ चरित भगत सुखदाता ॥ १ ॥
जे सुनि सादर नर बड़भागी । भव तरिहहिं ममता मद त्यागी ॥
आदिसक्ति जेहिं जग उपजाया । सोउ अवतरिहि मोरि यह माया ॥ २ ॥
पुरउब मैं अभिलाष तुम्हारा । सत्य सत्य पन सत्य हमारा ॥
पुनि पुनि अस कहि कृपानिधाना । अंतरधान भए भगवाना ॥ ३ ॥
दंपति उर धरि भगत कृपाला । तेहिं आश्रम निवसे कछु काला ॥
समय पाइ तनु तजि अनयासा । जाइ कीन्ह अमरावति बासा ॥ ४ ॥

Voluntarily assuming human guise I will manifest Myself in your house. Bodying Myself forth with My rays I will perform sportive acts which will be a source of delight to My devotees. Hearing of such exploits with reverence blessed men shall cross the ocean of worldly existence, renouncing

the feeling of meum and arrogance. This Māyā, who is no other than My primordial energy that has brought forth the universe, She too will manifest Herself. In this way I will accomplish your desire and this pledge of Mine shall never, never, never fail." Repeating this again and again, the gracious Lord vanished out of sight. Cherishing in their mind the image of the Lord who is so compassionate to His devotees, the wedded couple stayed in that hermitage for some time more. And dropping their body, when the time came, without the least pain they went and took their abode in Amarāvatī, the city of immortals (1—4)

दो०—यह इतिहास पुनीत अति उमहि कही बृषकेतु ।
भरद्वाज सुनु अपर पुनि राम जनम कर हेतु ॥ १५२ ॥

This most sacred legend was related by Śiva (who has a bull emblazoned on His standard) to Umā Bharadwāja, now hear yet another cause of Śrī Rāma's birth. (152)

[PAUSE 5 FOR A THIRTY-DAY RECITATION]

चौ०—सुनु मुनि कथा पुनीत पुरानी । जो गिरिजा प्रति संभु बखानी ॥
बिस्व बिदित एक कैकय देसू । सत्यकेतु तहँ बसइ नरेसू ॥ १ ॥
धरम धुरंधर नीति निधाना । तेज प्रताप सील बलवाना ॥
तेहि कें भए जुगल सुत बीरा । सब गुन धाम महा रनधीरा ॥ २ ॥
राज धनी जो जेठ सुत आही । नाम प्रतापभानु अस ताही ॥
अपर सुतहि अरिमर्दन नामा । भुजबल अतुल अचल संग्रामा ॥ ३ ॥
भाइहि भाइहि परम समीती । सकल दोष छल बरजित प्रीती ॥
जेठे सुतहि राज नृप दीन्हा । हरि हित आपु गवन बन कीन्हा ॥ ४ ॥

Listen, O sage, to an old and sacred legend which was narrated by Śambhu to Girijā. There was a principality known by the name of Kaikaya, which was celebrated throughout the world. A king named Satyaketu ruled there. He was a champion of virtue, a storehouse of political wisdom, dignified, glorious, amiable and powerful. He had two gallant sons, who were repositories of all virtues and most staunch in battle. The elder of the two and the heir to the throne was named Pratāpabhānu. The other was known by the name of Arimardana, who was unequalled in strength of arm and steady in battle. There was perfect unity between the two brothers and the affection each bore to the other was free from all blemish and guile. To the elder son the king resigned the throne and withdrew himself into the forest for the sake of devotion to Śrī Hari. (1—4)

दो०—जब प्रतापरबि भयउ नृप फिरी दोहाई देस ।
प्रजा पाल अति बेदबिधि कतहुँ नहीं अघ लेस ॥ १५३ ॥

When Pratāpabhānu became king, a proclamation to this effect was made throughout the land. He looked after his subjects with utmost care according to the precepts of the Vedas and there was not a speck of sin anywhere (in his kingdom). (153)

चौ०—नृप हितकारक सचिव सयाना । नाम धरमरुचि सुक्र समाना ॥
सचिव सयान बंधु बलबीरा । आपु प्रतापपुंज रनधीरा ॥ १ ॥
सेन संग चतुरंग अपारा । अमित सुभट सब समर जुझारा ॥
सेन बिलोकि राउ हरषाना । अरु बाजे गहगहे निसाना ॥ २ ॥
बिजय हेतु कटकई बनाई । सुदिन साधि नृप चलेउ बजाई ॥
जहँ तहँ परीं अनेक लराईं । जीते सकल भूप बरिआईं ॥ ३ ॥
सप्त दीप भुजबल बस कीन्हे । लै लै दंड छाड़ि नृप दीन्हे ॥
सकल अवनि मंडल तेहि काला । एक प्रतापभानु महिपाला ॥ ४ ॥

The prime minister, Dharmaruchi by name, was a second Śukra* and was as devoted to the king as he was wise. With a prudent counseller and a gallant and powerful brother, the king himself was an embodiment of glory and daring in war. He owned a vast army consisting of horse and foot, chariots and elephants. It had numberless excellent warriors all of whom fought fearlessly in battle. The king rejoiced to see his army and there was a tumultuous sound of kettledrums. He collected a special force for the conquest of the world, and availing himself of an auspicious day marched forth with beat of drums A number of battles were fought here and there and all hostile kings were brought to their knees by superior might. By the strength of his arm he reduced all the seven sections of the terrestrial region and let the princes go on payment of tribute. Now Pratāpabhānu was the undisputed sovereign of the entire globe. (1—4)

दो०—स्वबस बिस्व करि बाहुबल निज पुर कीन्ह प्रबेसु ।
अरथ धरम कामादि सुख सेवइ समयँ नरेसु ॥ १५४ ॥

Having thus subjugated the whole universe by the might of his arm, the king re-entered his capital. He devoted himself to the pleasures of wealth, religious practices and sense-gratification etc. at the appropriate time. (154)

चौ०—भूप प्रतापभानु बल पाई । कामधेनु भै भूमि सुहाई ॥
सब दुख बरजित प्रजा सुखारी । धरमसील सुंदर नर नारी ॥ १ ॥
सचिव धरमरुचि हरि पद प्रीती । नृप हित हेतु सिखव नित नीती ॥
गुर सुर संत पितर महिदेवा । करइ सदा नृप सब कै सेवा ॥ २ ॥
भूप धरम जे बेद बखाने । सकल करइ सादर सुख माने ॥
दिन प्रति देइ बिबिध बिधि दाना । सुनइ सास्त्र बर बेद पुराना ॥ ३ ॥
नाना बापीं कूप तड़ागा । सुमन बाटिका सुंदर बागा ॥
बिप्रभवन सुरभवन सुहाए । सब तीरथन्ह बिचित्र बनाए ॥ ४ ॥

Invigorated by King Pratāpabhānu's might, the charming earth became a cow of plenty as it were (yielded all one's coveted products). The people were happy and free from all sorrows and both men and women were good-looking and virtuous. The minister, Dharmaruchi, was devoted to the feet of Śrī Hari; in the interest of his royal master he advised him on state policy every day.

* The celebrated preceptor of the Daityas, who is noted for his political insight and is credited with the authorship of the famous work on political science, *Śukranīti*.

Preceptors, gods, saints, manes and Brahmans—the king invariably served them all. Whatever duties have been enjoined on a king in the Vedas, he gladly and devoutly performed. He bestowed gifts of various kinds every day and listened to the best scriptures including the Vedas and the Purānas. In all holy places he constructed many small and big wells and tanks, flower gardens and lovely orchards, dwellings for the Brahmans and beautiful temples of wonderful architecture. (1—4)

दो०—जहँ लगि कहे पुरान श्रुति एक एक सब जाग।
वार सहस्र सहस्र नृप किए सहित अनुराग ॥ १५५ ॥

Whatever sacrifices have been enjoined in the Vedas and the Purāṇas, the king devoutly performed each one of them a thousand times. (155)

चौ०—हृदयँ न कछु फल अनुसंधाना। भूप बिबेकी परम सुजाना ॥
करइ जे धरम करम मन बानी। बासुदेव अर्पित नृप ग्यानी ॥ १ ॥
चढ़ि बर बाजि बार एक राजा। मृगया कर सब साजि समाजा ॥
बिंध्याचल गभीर बन गयऊ। मृग पुनीत बहु मारत भयऊ ॥ २ ॥
फिरत बिपिन नृप दीख बराहू। जनु बन दुरेउ ससिहि ग्रसि राहू ॥
बड़ बिधु नहिं समात मुख माहीं। मनहुँ क्रोध बस उगिलत नाहीं ॥ ३ ॥
कोल कराल दसन छबि गाई। तनु बिसाल पीवर अधिकाई ॥
घुरुघुरात हय आरौ पाएँ। चकित बिलोकत कान उठाएँ ॥ ४ ॥

There was no seeking for any reward in his heart; the king was a man of great intelligence and wisdom. Whatever meritorious act he performed in thought, word or deed, the wise king dedicated it to Lord Vāsudeva (the all-pervading God Viṣṇu). Equipping himself with all the outfit of hunting, the king mounted a gallant steed one day and, entering the dense forest of the Vindhya range, killed many a sacred deer. While ranging in the wood he espied a wild boar. It looked as if with the moon in his mouth the demon Rāhu had hid in the forest. The orb was too large to be contained in the mouth, yet in his rage he would not disgorge it. Thus have I chosen to portray the beauty of the frightful tusks of the boar, while its body too was of an enormous size and bulk. Growling at the tramp of the horse and pricking up its ears it gazed with a startled look. (1—4)

दो०—नील महीधर सिखर सम देखि बिसाल बराहु।
चपरि चलेउ हय सुटुकि नृप हाँकि न होइ निबाहु ॥ १५६ ॥

On seeing the huge boar, which resembled a purple mountain-peak, the king whipped the horse and advanced rapidly, challenging the boar at the same time and saying it could no longer escape. (156)

चौ०—आवत देखि अधिक रव बाजी। चलेउ बराह मरुत गति भाजी ॥
तुरत कीन्ह नृप सर संधाना। महि मिलि गयउ बिलोकत बाना ॥ १ ॥

नकि नकि तीर महीस चलावा । करि छल सुअर सरीर बचावा ॥
प्रगटत दुरत जाइ मृग भागा । रिस बस भूप चलेउ सँग लागा ॥ २ ॥
गयउ दूरि घन गहन बराहू । जहँ नाहिन गज बाजि निबाहू ॥
अति अकेल बन बिपुल कलेसू । तदपि न मृग मग तजइ नरेसू ॥ ३ ॥
कोल बिलोकि भूप बड़ धीरा । भागि पैठ गिरिगुहाँ गभीरा ॥
अगम देखि नृप अति पछिताई । फिरेउ महाबन परेउ भुलाई ॥ ४ ॥

When it saw the horse coming on with a great noise, the boar took to flight swift as wind The king lost no time in fitting the arrow to his bow and the boar crouched as soon as it saw the shaft. The king discharged his arrows taking a steady aim each time, but the boar saved itself by its wiliness. The beast rushed on, now hiding and now emerging into view, while the king in much excitement followed closely on its track. The boar went afar into a dense thicket, which was impenetrable by horse or elephant. Even though the king was all by himself and was faced with untold hardships in the forest, still he would not abandon the chase. Seeing the king so determined, the boar slunk away into a deep mountain-cave. When the king perceived that there was no access to the cave, he had to return much disappointed; and, what was worse, he lost his track in the great forest. (1—4)

दो०—खेद खिन्न छुद्धित तृषित राजा बाजि समेत ।
खोजत ब्याकुल सरित सर जल बिनु भयउ अचेत ॥ १५७ ॥

Exhausted with much exertion and oppressed by hunger and thirst, the king and his horse kept searching for a stream or pond and almost fainted for want of water. (157)

चौ०—फिरत बिपिन आश्रम एक देखा । तहँ बस नृपति कपट मुनिबेषा ॥
जासु देस नृप लीन्ह छड़ाई । समर सेन तजि गयउ पराई ॥ १ ॥
समय प्रतापभानु कर जानी । आपन अति असमय अनुमानी ॥
गयउ न गृह मन बहुत गलानी । मिला न राजहि नृप अभिमानी ॥ २ ॥
रिस उर मारि रंक जिमि राजा । बिपिन बसइ तापस कें साजा ॥
तासु समीप गवन नृप कीन्हा । यह प्रतापरबि तेहिं तब चीन्हा ॥ ३ ॥
राउ तृषित नहिं सो पहिचाना । देखि सुबेष महामुनि जाना ॥
उतरि तुरग तें कीन्ह प्रनामा । परम चतुर न कहेउ निज नामा ॥ ४ ॥

While wandering in the forest he espied a hermitage. In that hermitage dwelt, in the disguise of a hermit, a monarch who had been despoiled of his kingdom by Pratāpabhānu and who had run away from the field of battle deserting his army. Knowing that the time was propitious for Pratāpabhānu and most unfavourable to his own self, he felt much disgusted at heart and refused to return home, and he was too proud to come to terms with the victor. Suppressing the anger in his own heart the ex-king lived in the forest like a pauper in the garb of an anchorite. It was to him that King Pratāpabhānu went and he for his part immediately recognized that

the newcomer was no other than Pratāpabhānu. Overcome by thirst, the latter, however, could not recognize the ex-king. Perceiving his holy garb Pratāpabhānu took him to be a great sage and, getting down from his horse, made obeisance to him. The king was, however, too astute to disclose his name. (1—4)

दो०—भूपति तृषित बिलोकि तेहिं सरबरु दीन्ह देखाइ।
मज्जन पान समेत हय कीन्ह नृपति हरषाइ ॥ १५८ ॥

Seeing King Pratāpabhānu thirsty, he showed him a good lake and the king as well as his horse gladly bathed in it and drank from it. (158)

चौ०—गै श्रम सकल सुखी नृप भयऊ। निज आश्रम तापस लै गयऊ ॥
आसन दीन्ह अस्त रबि जानी। पुनि तापस बोलेउ मृदु बानी ॥ १ ॥
को तुम्ह कस बन फिरहु अकेलें। सुंदर जुबा जीव परहेलें ॥
चक्रबर्ति के लच्छन तोरें। देखत दया लागि अति मोरें ॥ २ ॥
नाम प्रतापभानु अवनीसा। तासु सचिव मैं सुनहु मुनीसा ॥
फिरत अहेरें परेउँ भुलाई। बड़ें भाग देखेउँ पद आई ॥ ३ ॥
हम कहँ दुर्लभ दरस तुम्हारा। जानत हौं कछु भल होनिहारा ॥
कह मुनि तात भयउ अँधिआरा। जोजन सत्तरि नगरु तुम्हारा ॥ ४ ॥

The whole fatigue was gone and the king heaved a sigh of relief. The hermit thereafter took him back to his hermitage; and perceiving that it was sunset now he gave him a seat and then spoke to him in polite terms, "Who are you and wherefore do you risk your life by roaming in the forest all alone, even though you are so young and handsome? Reading the marks of an emperor on your person I am moved with great pity." "Listen, O great sage: there is a king named Pratāpabhānu; I am his minister. Ranging in pursuit of game I have lost my way and by great good fortune I have been led into your presence. Your sight is a rare boon to me, it leads me to believe that something good is about to befall me." The hermit said, "It is now dusk, my son, and your city is five hundred and sixty miles away. (1—4)

दो०—निसा घोर गंभीर बन पंथ न सुनहु सुजान।
बसहु आजु अस जानि तुम्ह जाएहु होत बिहान ॥ १५९ (क) ॥

"Listen, O friend: dark and dreary is the night, and the forest is dense and trackless; knowing this, tarry here overnight and depart next morning." (159 A)

तुलसी जसि भवतब्यता तैसी मिलइ सहाइ।
आपुनु आवइ ताहि पहिं ताहि तहाँ लै जाइ ॥ १५९ (ख) ॥

The inevitable, says Tulasīdāsa, is invariably preceded by circumstances that are favourable to it. Either it comes to a man or takes him to the cause of his doom. (159 B)

चौ०—भलेहिं नाथ आयसु धरि सीसा। बाँधि तुरग तरु बैठ महीसा ॥
नृप बहु भाँति प्रसंसेउ ताही। चरन बंदि निज भाग्य सराही ॥ १ ॥

पुनि बोलेउ मृदु गिरा सुहाई । जानि पिता प्रभु करउँ ढिठाई ॥
मोहि मुनीस सुत सेवक जानी । नाथ नाम निज कहहु बखानी ॥ २ ॥
तेहि न जान नृप नृपहि सो जाना । भूप सुहृद सो कपट सयाना ॥
बैरी पुनि छत्री पुनि राजा । छल बल कीन्ह चहइ निज काजा ॥ ३ ॥
समुझि राजसुख दुखित अराती । अवाँ अनल इव सुलगइ छाती ॥
सरल बचन नृप के सुनि काना । बयर सँभारि हृदयँ हरषाना ॥ ४ ॥

"Very well, my lord," the king replied: and bowing to the hermit's command he tied up the horse to a tree and then sat down. The king extolled him in many ways and bowing at his feet congratulated himself. He then spoke to him in soft and endearing terms, "Regarding you as a father, my lord, I venture to address you. Looking upon me as your son and servant O great sage, pray tell me your name in full, my master." Although the king did not recognize him, he recognized the king. While the king had a guileless heart, the hermit was a pastmaster in fraud. Being an enemy in the first instance, and a Kṣatriya on top of it and again of royal blood, he sought to accomplish his end by dint of his cunning. The thought of the pleasures of royalty had made the enemy king sad; the fire of jealousy smouldered within his heart like that of a furnace. On hearing the artless words of Pratāpabhānu and recalling the grudge he had nursed against him, the hermit felt delighted at heart.

(1—4)

दो०—कपट बोरि बानी मृदुल बोलेउ जुगुति समेत ।
नाम हमार भिखारि अब निर्धन रहित निकेत ॥ १६० ॥

He uttered the following soft yet false and artful words, "My name is now Bhikhārī (a mendicant), penniless and homeless as I am." (160)

चौ०—कह नृप जे बिग्यान निधाना । तुम्ह सारिखे गलित अभिमाना ॥
सदा रहहिं अपनपौ दुराएँ । सब बिधि कुसल कुबेष बनाएँ ॥ १ ॥
तेहि तें कहहिं संत श्रुति टेरें । परम अकिंचन प्रिय हरि केरें ॥
तुम्ह सम अधन भिखारि अगेहा । होत बिरंचि सिवहि संदेहा ॥ २ ॥
जोसि सोसि तव चरन नमामी । मो पर कृपा करिअ अब स्वामी ॥
सहज प्रीति भूपति कै देखी । आपु बिषय बिस्वास बिसेषी ॥ ३ ॥
सब प्रकार राजहि अपनाई । बोलेउ अधिक सनेह जनाई ॥
सुनु सतिभाउ कहउँ महिपाला । इहाँ बसत बीते बहु काला ॥ ४ ॥

The king replied, "Those who are repositories of wisdom and free from pride like you always keep their reality concealed; even though proficient in every way, they prefer to remain in tattered clothes. That is why saints as well as the Vedas proclaim that those who are supremely indigent are held most dear by Śrī Hari. Penniless and homeless beggars like you fill the minds of even Virañchi and Śiva with doubt. Whoever you may be, I bow at Your feet; now be gracious to me, my lord." When the hermit saw the king's artless affection and extraordinary faith in him, he won him over in every way and

spoke with a still greater affection, "Listen, O king: I tell you sincerely that I have dwelt here for long. (1—4)

दो०—अब लगि मोहि न मिलेउ कोउ मैं न जनावउँ काहु ।
लोकमान्यता अनल सम कर तप कानन दाहु ॥ १६१ (क) ॥

"No one has come to me so far nor do I make myself known to anyone, for popular esteem is like a wild fire, which consumes the forest of penance (i. e., neutralizes it). (161 A)

सो०—तुलसी देखि सुबेषु भूलहिं मूढ़ न चतुर नर ।
सुंदर केकिहि पेखु बचन सुधा सम असन अहि ॥ १६१ (ख) ॥

Not only fools, says Tulasīdāsa, but even clever men are taken in by fair appearances. Look at the beautiful peacock though its notes are sweet like nectar, it devours snakes. (161 B)

चौ०—तातें गुपुत रहउँ जग माहीं । हरि तजि किमपि प्रयोजन नाहीं ॥
प्रभु जानत सब बिनहिं जनाएँ । कहहु कवनि सिधि लोक रिझाएँ ॥ १ ॥
तुम्ह सुचि सुमति परम प्रिय मोरें । प्रीति प्रतीति मोहि पर तोरें ॥
अब जौं तात दुरावउँ तोही । दारुन दोष घटइ अति मोही ॥ २ ॥
जिमि जिमि तापसु कथइ उदासा । तिमि तिमि नृपहि उपज बिस्वासा ॥
देखा स्वबस कर्म मन बानी । तब बोला तापस बगध्यानी ॥ ३ ॥
नाम हमार एकतनु भाई । सुनि नृप बोलेउ पुनि सिरु नाई ॥
कहहु नाम कर अरथ बखानी । मोहि सेवक अति आपन जानी ॥ ४ ॥

"That is why I live in this world away from the public gaze. I have little to do with anything other than Śrī Hari. The Lord knows everything without being told; tell me, then, what is to be gained by humouring the world. You are sincere and intelligent and are therefore supremely dear to me; and I too have earned your affection and confidence. Now, my son, if I were to keep anything from you, I shall incur the most severe blame." The more the hermit talked of his indifference to the world the more trustful grew the king. When the false anchorite saw the king devoted to him in thought, word and deed, he said, "My name, brother, is Ekatanu." Hearing this, the king bowed his head and asked further, "Kindly explain to me the meaning of this appellation, recognizing me as your faithful servant. (1—4)

दो०—आदिसृष्टि उपजी जबहिं तब उतपति भै मोरि ।
नाम एकतनु हेतु तेहि देह न धरी बहोरि ॥ १६२ ॥

"My birth took place at the first dawn of creation. Since then I have never taken another body; that is why I am called Ekatanu. (162)

चौ०—जनि आचरजु करहु मन माहीं । सुत तप तें दुर्लभ कछु नाहीं ॥
तपबल तें जग सृजइ बिधाता । तपबल बिष्नु भए परित्राता ॥ १ ॥
तपबल संभु करहिं संघारा । तप तें अगम न कछु संसारा ॥
भयउ नृपहि सुनि अति अनुरागा । कथा पुरातन कहै सो लागा ॥ २ ॥

करम धरम इतिहास अनेका । करइ निरूपन बिरति बिबेका ॥
उद्भव पालन प्रलय कहानी । कहेसि अमित आचरज बखानी ॥ ३ ॥
सुनि महीप तापस बस भयऊ । आपन नाम कहन तब लयऊ ॥
कह तापस नृप जानउँ तोही । कीन्हेहु कपट लाग भल मोही ॥ ४ ॥

"Marvel not, my son, to hear this, for nothing is too difficult to obtain through penance. By dint of penance Brahmā creates the universe; by dint of penance Viṣṇu assumed the role of its protector. By dint of penance, again, Śambhu destroys the world. there is nothing in this world which cannot be attained through penance" Hearing this, the king felt much enamoured and the hermit commenced relating old legends Having discussed topics of Karma (action) and Dharma (duty) and told many legends bearing on them, he discoursed on dispassion and knowledge. And he further related at length countless marvellous stories connected with the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the universe. Hearing all this the king completely yielded to the influence of the hermit and then proceeded to tell him his real name. Said the hermit, "O king, I know you. Even though you tried to deceive me, I appreciated this move on your part.

(1—4)

सो०—सुनु महीस असि नीति जहँ तहँ नाम न कहहिं नृप ।
मोहि तोहि पर अति प्रीति सोइ चतुरता बिचारि तव ॥ १६३ ॥

"O king, the political maxim is that kings should not disclose their name in all cases. And when I thought of your political sagacity, I conceived great love for you.

(163)

चौ०—नाम तुम्हार प्रतापदिनेसा । सत्यकेतु तव पिता नरेसा ॥
गुर प्रसाद सब जानिअ राजा । कहिअ न आपन जानि अकाजा ॥ १ ॥
देखि तात तव सहज सुधाई । प्रीति प्रतीति नीति निपुनाई ॥
उपजि परी ममता मन मोरें । कहउँ कथा निज पूछे तोरें ॥ २ ॥
अब प्रसन्न मैं संसय नाहीं । मागु जो भूप भाव मन माहीं ॥
सुनि सुबचन भूपति हरषाना । गहि पद बिनय कीन्हि बिधि नाना ॥ ३ ॥
कृपासिंधु मुनि दरसन तोरें । चारि पदारथ करतल मोरें ॥
प्रभुहि तथापि प्रसन्न बिलोकी । मागि अगम बर होउँ असोकी ॥ ४ ॥

"Your name is Pratāpabhānu; King Satyaketu was your father. O king, by the grace of my preceptor I know everything; but foreseeing my own harm I refuse to tell everything I know. When I saw your natural straightforwardness, affection, faith and political wisdom, I conceived a spontaneous affection for you; and that is why I told you my own story on your asking I am now pleased, doubt not and ask what you will, O king." Hearing these agreeable words, the king rejoiced and, clasping the hermit's feet, supplicated to him in many ways "O gracious sage, by your very sight I have within my grasp all the four ends of human existence (viz., religious merit, wealth, enjoyment and final beatitude). Yet, as I see my lord so gracious, I would ask a boon which is impossible to attain otherwise, and thereby overcome sorrow.

(1—4)

दो०—जरा मरन दुख रहित तनु समर जितै जनि कोउ ।
एकछत्र रिपुहीन महि राज कलप सत होउ ॥ १६४ ॥

"Let my body be free from old age, death and suffering; let no one vanquish me in battle and let me enjoy undisputed sovereignty over the globe for a hundred Kalpas (repetitions of creation) and let me have no enemies." (164)

चौ०—कह तापस नृप ऐसेइ होऊ । कारन एक कठिन सुनु सोऊ ॥
कालउ तुअ पद नाइहि सीसा । एक बिप्रकुल छाड़ि महीसा ॥ १ ॥
तपबल बिप्र सदा बरिआरा । तिन्ह के कोप न कोउ रखवारा ॥
जौं बिप्रन्ह बस करहु नरेसा । तौ तुअ बस बिधि बिष्नु महेसा ॥ २ ॥
चल न ब्रह्मकुल सन बरिआई । सत्य कहउँ दोउ भुजा उठाई ॥
बिप्र श्राप बिनु सुनु महिपाला । तोर नास नहिं कवनेहुँ काला ॥ ३ ॥
हरषेउ राउ बचन सुनि तासू । नाथ न होइ मोर अब नासू ॥
तव प्रसाद प्रभु कृपानिधाना । मो कहुँ सर्ब काल कल्याना ॥ ४ ॥

Said the anchorite, "So be it, O king. But there is one difficulty; hear it too. Even Death shall bow his head at your feet (much more those who are subject to death). The only exception shall be the Brahmans, O ruler of the earth. The Brahmans are ever powerful by virtue of their penance; no one can deliver from their wrath. If you can reduce the Brahmans to your will, O king, even Brahmā, Viṣṇu and the great Lord Śiva shall be at your command. Might is of no avail against the Brahmans; with both arms raised to heaven I tell you this truth. Listen, O sovereign; if you escape the Brahman's curse, you shall never perish." Hearing his words, the king rejoiced and said, "My lord, I shall no longer die. By your grace, O benevolent master, I shall be blessed at all times." (1—4)

दो०—एवमस्तु कहि कपटमुनि बोला कुटिल बहोरि ।
मिलब हमार भुलाब निज कहहु त हमहि न खोरि ॥ १६५ ॥

"Amen!" said the false anchorite, and added with crafty intent, "If you tell anyone about my meeting with you and your straying away, the fault shall not be mine. (165)

चौ०—तातें मैं तोहि बरजउँ राजा । कहें कथा तव परम अकाजा ॥
छठें श्रवन यह परत कहानी । नास तुम्हार सत्य मम बानी ॥ १ ॥
यह प्रगटें अथवा द्विजश्रापा । नास तोर सुनु भानुप्रतापा ॥
आन उपायँ निधन तव नाहीं । जौं हरि हर कोपहिं मन माहीं ॥ २ ॥
सत्य नाथ पद गहि नृप भाषा । द्विज गुर कोप कहहु को राखा ॥
राखइ गुर जौं कोप बिधाता । गुर बिरोध नहिं कोउ जग त्राता ॥ ३ ॥
जौं न चलब हम कहे तुम्हारें । होउ नास नहिं सोच हमारें ॥
एकहिं डर डरपत मन मोरा । प्रभु महिदेव श्राप अति घोरा ॥ ४ ॥

"I warn you, O king, because great harm shall befall you if you relate this incident to anyone. If this talk happens to reach a third pair of ears, I tell you the truth, you are doomed. O Pratāpabhānu, if you divulge this secret or if a Brahman curses you, you are undone. In no other way shall you die, even if Śrī Hari and Hara get angry with you." "It is true, my lord," said the king, clasping the hermit's feet. "Tell me, who can deliver from the wrath of a Brahman or a spiritual preceptor? A Guru can save one even if one has evoked the wrath of Brahmā; but in the event of a quarrel with one's preceptor there is no one in the world who can save. If I do not follow your advice, let me perish; I care not. My mind is disturbed by only one fear; the curse of a Brahman, my lord, is something most terrible. (1—4)

दो०—होहिं बिप्र बस कवन बिधि कहहु कृपा करि सोउ ।
तुम्ह तजि दीनदयाल निज हितू न देखउँ कोउ ॥ १६६ ॥

"How shall I be able to win over the Brahmans? Kindly tell me that too. I see no friend other than you, my gracious lord." (166)

चौ०—सुनु नृप बिबिध जतन जग माहीं । कष्टसाध्य पुनि होहिं कि नाहीं ॥
अहइ एक अति सुगम उपाई । तहाँ परंतु एक कठिनाई ॥ १ ॥
मम आधीन जुगुति नृप सोई । मोर जाब तव नगर न होई ॥
आजु लगें अरु जब तें भयऊँ । काहू के गृह ग्राम न गयऊँ ॥ २ ॥
जौं न जाउँ तव होइ अकाजू । बना आइ असमंजस आजू ॥
सुनि महीस बोलेउ मृदु बानी । नाथ निगम असि नीति बखानी ॥ ३ ॥
बड़े सनेह लघुन्ह पर करहीं । गिरि निज सिरनि सदा तृन धरहीं ॥
जलधि अगाध मौलि बह फेनू । संतत धरनि धरत सिर रेनू ॥ ४ ॥

"Listen, O king: there are various expedients in this world. But they are hard to accomplish and are of doubtful issue besides. Of course, there is one very simple device; but that too involves one difficulty. Its contrivance depends on me; but my going to your city is out of the question. Ever since I was born I have never been to anybody's house or village so far. And if I do not go, it will be a misfortune for you. I am therefore in a dilemma today." Hearing this, the king replied in a polite language, "My lord, there is a maxim laid down in the Vedas: the great show kindness to the small. Mountains always bear tiny blades of grass on their tops, the fathomless ocean carries floating foam on its breast and the earth ever bears dust on its bosom." (1—4)

दो०—अस कहि गहे नरेस पद स्वामी होहु कृपाल ।
मोहि लागि दुख सहिअ प्रभु सज्जन दीनदयाल ॥ १६७ ॥

So saying, the king clasped the hermit's feet and said, "Be gracious to me, my master. You are a saint, compassionate to the humble; therefore, my lord, take this trouble on my behalf." (167)

चौ०—जानि नृपहि आपन आधीना । बोला तापस कपट प्रबीना ॥
सत्य कहउँ भूपति सुनु तोही । जग नाहिन दुर्लभ कछु मोही ॥ १ ॥

अवसि काज मैं करिहउँ तोरा । मन तन बचन भगत तैं मोरा ॥
जोग जुगुति तप मंत्र प्रभाऊ । फलइ तबहिं जब करिअ दुराऊ ॥ २ ॥
जौं नरेस मैं करौं रसोई । तुम्ह परुसहु मोहि जान न कोई ॥
अन्न सो जोइ जोइ भोजन करई । सोइ सोइ तव आयसु अनुसरई ॥ ३ ॥
पुनि तिन्ह के गृह जेवँइ जोऊ । तव बस होइ भूप सुनु सोऊ ॥
जाइ उपाय रचहु नृप एहू । संबत भरि संकलप करेहू ॥ ४ ॥

Knowing that the king was completely under his influence, the hermit, who was clever at deception, said, "Listen, O king· I tell you the truth. For me in this world there is nothing hard to obtain. I will surely accomplish your object, devoted as you are in thought, word and deed to me. The power of Yoga (contemplation), planning, penance and mystic formulas works only when secrecy is maintained about them. O king, if I cook food and you serve i and if nobody comes to know me, whoever tastes the food so prepared shall become amenable to your orders. Again, I tell you, whosoever dines at the house of such people shall, O king, be dominated by your will. Go and operate this scheme, O king, and take this vow for a whole year. (1—4)

दो०—नित नूतन द्विज सहस सत बरेहु सहित परिवार ।
मैं तुम्हरे संकलप लगि दिनहिं करबि जेवनार ॥ १६८ ॥

"Every day invite a new set of a hundred thousand Brahmans with their families; while I, so long as your vow lasts, shall provide the daily banquet. (168)

चौ०—एहि बिधि भूप कष्ट अति थोरें । होइहहिं सकल बिप्र बस तोरें ॥
करिहहिं बिप्र होम मख सेवा । तेहिं प्रसंग सहजेहिं बस देवा ॥ १ ॥
और एक तोहि कहउँ लखाऊ । मैं एहिं बेष न आउब काऊ ॥
तुम्हरे उपरोहित कहुँ राया । हरि आनब मैं करि निज माया ॥ २ ॥
तपबल तेहि करि आपु समाना । रखिहउँ इहाँ बरष परवाना ॥
मैं धरि तासु बेषु सुनु राजा । सब बिधि तोर सँवारब काजा ॥ ३ ॥
गै निसि बहुत सयन अब कीजे । मोहि तोहि भूप भेंट दिन तीजे ॥
मैं तपबल तोहि तुरग समेता । पहुँचैहउँ सोवतहि निकेता ॥ ४ ॥

"In this way, O king, with little exertion all the Brahmans shall be reduced to your will. The Brahmans in their turn will offer oblations into the sacred fire, perform big sacrifices and practise adoration; and through that channel the gods too shall be easily won over. I give you one more sign. I will never come in this form. By my delusive power, O king, I will carry off your family priest and, making him just like myself by dint of my penance, will keep him here for the year; while I, O king, will take his form and manage everything for you. The night is far gone, so you had better retire now; on the third day we will meet again. By my penitential power I will convey you home, both you and your horse, even while you are asleep. (1—4)

दो०—मैं आउब सोइ बेषु धरि पहिचानेहु तब मोहि ।
जब एकांत बोलाइ सब कथा सुनावौं तोहि ॥ १६९ ॥

"I will come in the form I have told you, and you will recognize me when I call you aside and remind you of all this." (169)

चौ०—सयन कीन्ह नृप आयसु मानी । आसन जाइ बैठ छलग्यानी ॥
श्रमित भूप निद्रा अति आई । सो किमि सोव सोच अधिकाई ॥ १ ॥
कालकेतु निसिचर तहँ आवा । जेहिं सूकर होइ नृपहि भुलावा ॥
परम मित्र तापस नृप केरा । जानइ सो अति कपट घनेरा ॥ २ ॥
तेहि के सत सुत अरु दस भाई । खल अति अजय देव दुखदाई ॥
प्रथमहिं भूप समर सब मारे । बिप्र संत सुर देखि दुखारे ॥ ३ ॥
तेहिं खल पाछिल बयरु सँभारा । तापस नृप मिलि मंत्र बिचारा ॥
जेहिं रिपु छय सोइ रचेन्हि उपाऊ । भावी बस न जान कछु राऊ ॥ ४ ॥

The king went to sleep in obedience to the hermit: while the counterfeit sage returned to his own seat and sat down there. Deep sleep came upon the weary monarch; but how could the other fellow sleep, distracted as he was with anxiety. The demon Kālaketu made his appearance there: it was he who had assumed the form of a boar and led the king astray. A great friend of the hermit-king, he was skilled in manifold ways of deceit. He had a hundred sons and ten brothers, who were great villains, invincible and annoying to the gods. Seeing the Brahmans, saints and gods in distress the king had already killed them all in battle Recalling the old grudge the wretch conspired with the hermit-king and contrived a plot for the extermination of the enemy, but, as fate would have it, the king knew nothing of it. (1—4)

दो०—रिपु तेजसी अकेल अपि लघु करि गनिअ न ताहु ।
अजहुँ देत दुख रबि ससिहि सिर अवसेषित राहु ॥ १७० ॥

A spirited foe, even though left alone, should not be lightly regarded. The demon Rāhu,* who has nothing left of him but his head, is able to torment both the sun and moon even to this day. (170)

चौ०—तापस नृप निज सखहि निहारी । हरषि मिलेउ उठि भयउ सुखारी ॥
मित्रहि कहि सब कथा सुनाई । जातुधान बोला सुख पाई ॥ १ ॥
अब साधेउँ रिपु सुनहु नरेसा । जौं तुम्ह कीन्ह मोर उपदेसा ॥
परिहरि सोच रहहु तुम्ह सोई । बिनु औषध बिआधि बिधि खोई ॥ २ ॥
कुल समेत रिपु मूल बहाई । चौथें दिवस मिलब मैं आई ॥
तापस नृपहि बहुत परितोषी । चला महाकपटी अतिरोषी ॥ ३ ॥
भानुप्रतापहि बाजि समेता । पहुँचाएसि छन माझ निकेता ॥
नृपहि नारि पहिं सयन कराई । हयगृहँ बाँधेसि बाजि बनाई ॥ ४ ॥

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* According to the Hindu belief a solar or lunar eclipse takes place only when in the astral plane the demon Rāhu, a sworn enemy of both the sun-god and the moon-god, devours the one or the other either wholly or partly. The demon, however, consists of the head alone. his trunk having been cut off by God Viṣṇu while he was unlawfully attempting to partake of the nectar which was being served to the gods. Since, however, he had already tasted the nectar, the head became immortal.

The hermit-king was delighted to see his ally and rose to meet him. The meeting gave him much satisfaction and he related the whole story to his friend. The demon too was glad and said, "Listen, O king since you have followed my advice, take the enemy as subdued. Cease to worry now and lay yourself to rest. God has effected a cure without the use of a medicine. I will sweep away the enemy root and branch and see you on the fourth day." Fully reassuring the hermit-king, the arch-impostor, who was highly irascible, departed. In an instant he conveyed Pratāpabhānu to his palace, horse and all. Putting the king to bed beside his queen, he tied up the horse in the stall in the proper way.

(1—4)

दो०—राजा के उपरोहितहि हरि लै गयउ बहोरि ।
लै राखेसि गिरि खोह महुँ मायाँ करि मति भोरि ॥ १७१ ॥

Again he carried off the king's family priest and, depriving him of his senses by his supernatural power, kept him in a mountain-cave. (171)

चौ०—आपु बिरचि उपरोहित रूपा । परेउ जाइ तेहि सेज अनूपा ॥
जागेउ नृप अनभएँ बिहाना । देखि भवन अति अचरजु माना ॥ १ ॥
मुनि महिमा मन महुँ अनुमानी । उठेउ गवँहिं जेहिं जान न रानी ॥
कानन गयउ बाजि चढ़ि तेहीं । पुर नर नारि न जानेउ केहीं ॥ २ ॥
गएँ जाम जुग भूपति आवा । घर घर उत्सव बाज बधावा ॥
उपरोहितहि देख जब राजा । चकित बिलोक सुमिरि सोइ काजा ॥ ३ ॥
जुग सम नृपहि गए दिन तीनी । कपटी मुनि पद रह मति लीनी ॥
समय जानि उपरोहित आवा । नृपहि मते सब कहि समुझावा ॥ ४ ॥

Himself assuming the form of the family priest, the demon went and lay down on the former's sumptuous bed. The king woke even before daybreak and felt much astonished to find himself at home. Attributing the miracle to the supernatural power of the sage, he got up quietly, unperceived by the queen. Mounting the same horse he rode off to the woods without any man or woman of the city knowing it. When it was midday, the king returned, there was rejoicing and festal music in every house. When the king saw his family-priest, he looked at him in amazement, recollecting the object he held so dear to his heart. The interval of three days hung heavy on the monarch as an age, his mind being set on the feet of the false anchorite. At the appointed time the priest came and reminded him in detail of all that had been agreed upon.

(1—4)

दो०—नृप हरषेउ पहिचानि गुरु भ्रम बस रहा न चेत ।
बरे तुरत सत सहस बर बिप्र कुटुंब समेत ॥ १७२ ॥

The king was delighted to recognize his preceptor (in the priest's form); his mind was too clouded to have any sense left. At once he invited a hundred thousand chosen Brahmans with their families. (172)

चौ०—उपरोहित जेवनार बनाई। छरस चारि बिधि जसि श्रुति गाई॥
मायामय तेहिं कीन्हि रसोई। बिंजन बहु गनि सकइ न कोई॥ १ ॥
बिबिध मृगन्ह कर आमिष राँधा। तेहि महुँ बिप्र माँसु खल साँधा॥
भोजन कहुँ सब बिप्र बोलाए। पद पखारि सादर बैठाए॥ २ ॥
परुसन जबहिं लाग महिपाला। भै अकासबानी तेहि काला॥
बिप्रबृंद उठि उठि गृह जाहू। है बड़ि हानि अन्न जनि खाहू॥ ३ ॥
भयउ रसोईं भूसुर माँसू। सब द्विज उठे मानि बिस्वासू॥
भूप बिकल मति मोहँ भुलानी। भावी बस न आव मुख बानी॥ ४ ॥

The priest cooked four kinds of foods with six different tastes as mentioned in the Vedas. He prepared an illusory banquet and a variety of seasoned dishes more than one could count. Dressing the flesh of a variety of animals the wretch mixed with it the cooked flesh of Brahmans. All the invited Brahmans were then called for the dinner. Their feet were duly washed and they were respectfully shown to their places. The moment the king began to serve the food, a (fictitious) voice from heaven (raised by the demon Kālaketu himself) said, "Up, up, Brahmans ! and return to your homes. Taste not this food; it is most harmful. The dishes include the flesh of the Brahmans." Up rose all the Brahmans believing the ethereal voice. The king lost his nerve; his mind was bewildered with infatuation. As fate would have it, he could not utter a word.

(1—4)

दो०—बोले बिप्र सकोप तब नहिं कछु कीन्ह बिचार।
जाइ निसाचर होहु नृप मूढ़ सहित परिवार॥ १७३ ॥

Then exclaimed the Brahmans in wrath, regardless of consequences, "O foolish king, go and take birth in the demon's form, you and all your family. (173)

चौ०—छत्रबंधु तैं बिप्र बोलाई। घालै लिए सहित समुदाई॥
ईस्वर राखा धरम हमारा। जैहसि तैं समेत परिवारा॥ १ ॥
संबत मध्य नास तव होऊ। जलदाता न रहिहि कुल कोऊ॥
नृप सुनि श्राप बिकल अति त्रासा। भै बहोरि बर गिरा अकासा॥ २ ॥
बिप्रहु श्राप बिचारि न दीन्हा। नहिं अपराध भूप कछु कीन्हा॥
चकित बिप्र सब सुनि नभबानी। भूप गयउ जहँ भोजन खानी॥ ३ ॥
तहँ न असन नहिं बिप्र सुआरा। फिरेउ राउ मन सोच अपारा॥
सब प्रसंग महिसुरन्ह सुनाई। त्रसित परेउ अवनीं अकुलाई॥ ४ ॥

"O vile Kṣatriya ! inviting the Brahmans you were out to ruin them with their families. But God has preserved our sanctity; it is you and your race that are undone. In the course of a year you shall perish, and not a soul shall be left in your family to offer water to gratify your spirit." Hearing the curse the king was sore stricken with fear. Again, a voice was heard from heaven, "O holy Brahmans, you have uttered this curse without careful thought; the king has committed no crime." The Brahmans were

astounded when they heard the ethereal voice. The king hastened to the kitchen. There was neither any food there nor the Brahman cook. The king returned in deep thought He related the whole story to the Brahmans and threw himself on the ground frantic with fear. (1—4)

दो०—भूपति भावी मिटइ नहिं जदपि न दूषन तोर ।
किएँ अन्यथा होइ नहिं बिप्रश्राप अति घोर ॥ १७४ ॥

"Even though you are guiltless, O king, what is inevitable fails not. A Brahman's curse is very terrible; no amount of effort can counteract it." (174)

चौ०—अस कहि सब महिदेव सिधाए । समाचार पुरलोगन्ह पाए ॥
सोचहिं दूषन दैवहि देहीं । बिरचत हंस काग किय जेहीं ॥ १ ॥
उपरोहितहि भवन पहुँचाई । असुर तापसहि खबरि जनाई ॥
तेहिं खल जहँ तहँ पत्र पठाए । सजि सजि सेन भूप सब धाए ॥ २ ॥
घेरेन्हि नगर निसान बजाई । बिबिध भाँति नित होइ लराई ॥
जूझे सकल सुभट करि करनी । बंधु समेत परेउ नृप धरनी ॥ ३ ॥
सत्यकेतु कुल कोउ नहिं बाँचा । बिप्रश्राप किमि होइ असाँचा ॥
रिपु जिति सब नृप नगर बसाई । निज पुर गवने जय जसु पाई ॥ ४ ॥

So saying, all the Brahmans dispersed. When the people of the city received the news, they were much perturbed and began to blame Providence, who had begun upon a swan and produced a crow instead. Conveying the priest to his house, the demon (Kālaketu) communicated the tidings to the hermit. The wretch in his turn despatched letters in all directions and a host of princes hastened with their troops martially arrayed and, beating their kettledrums, beleaguered the city. Every day battles were fought in diverse forms. All his champions fought valiantly and fell. And the king with his brother bit the dust. Not one of Satyaketu's family survived, a Brahman's curse can never fail. Having vanquished the foe and re-inhabiting the city all the chiefs returned to their own capitals enriched with victory and fame. (1—4)

दो०—भरद्वाज सुनु जाहि जब होइ बिधाता बाम ।
धूरि मेरुसम जनक जम ताहि ब्यालसम दाम ॥ १७५ ॥

Listen, O Bharadwāja whosoever incurs the displeasure of heaven, for him a grain of dust becomes vast as Mount Meru, a father becomes frightful as Yama (the god of death) and every rope a snake. (175)

चौ०—काल पाइ मुनि सुनु सोइ राजा । भयउ निसाचर सहित समाजा ॥
दस सिर ताहि बीस भुजदंडा । रावन नाम बीर बरिबंडा ॥ १ ॥
भूप अनुज अरिमर्दन नामा । भयउ सो कुंभकरन बलधामा ॥
सचिव जो रहा धरमरुचि जासू । भयउ बिमात्र बंधु लघु तासू ॥ २ ॥
नाम बिभीषन जेहि जग जाना । बिष्नुभगत बिग्यान निधाना ॥
रहे जे सुत सेवक नृप केरे । भए निसाचर घोर घनेरे ॥ ३ ॥

कामरूप खल जिनस अनेका। कुटिल भयंकर बिगत बिबेका ॥
कृपा रहित हिंसक सब पापी। बरनि न जाहिं बिस्व परितापी ॥ ४ ॥

O sage, in due time, I tell you, this king, with his family, was born as a demon. He had ten heads and twenty arms. His name was Rāvana, he was a formidable hero. The king's younger brother, Arimardana by name, became the powerful Kumbhakarṇa. His minister, who was known as Dharmaruchi, became Rāvaṇa's younger half-brother, Vibhīṣaṇa by name, who is known to the whole world as a devotee of God Viṣṇu and a repository of wisdom. And the king's sons and servants, they were born a fierce demon crew. These wretches could take any shape they liked and belonged to various orders. They were all wicked, monstrous and devoid of sense and were ruthless, bloody and sinful. They were a torment to all creation beyond what words can tell. (1—4)

दो०—उपजे जदपि पुलस्त्यकुल पावन अमल अनूप।
तदपि महीसुर श्राप बस भए सकल अघरूप ॥ १७६ ॥

Even though they were born in the incomparably pure and holy line of the sage Pulastya, yet, on account of the Brahman's curse, they were all embodiments of sin. (176)

चौ०—कीन्ह बिबिध तप तीनिहुँ भाई। परम उग्र नहिं बरनि सो जाई ॥
गयउ निकट तप देखि बिधाता। मागहु बर प्रसन्न मैं ताता ॥ १ ॥
करि बिनती पद गहि दससीसा। बोलेउ बचन सुनहु जगदीसा ॥
हम काहू के मरहिं न मारें। बानर मनुज जाति दुइ बारें ॥ २ ॥
एवमस्तु तुम्ह बड़ तप कीन्हा। मैं ब्रह्माँ मिलि तेहि बर दीन्हा ॥
पुनि प्रभु कुंभकरन पहिं गयऊ। तेहि बिलोकि मन बिसमय भयऊ ॥ ३ ॥
जौं एहिं खल नित करब अहारू। होइहि सब उजारि संसारू ॥
सारद प्रेरि तासु मति फेरी। मागेसि नीद मास षट केरी ॥ ४ ॥

All the three brothers practised austerities of various kinds, terrible beyond all description. Seeing their penance the Creator drew nigh and said to the eldest of them, "Ask a boon, dear son." The ten-headed Rāvaṇa suppliantly clasped his feet and addressed to him the following words. "Listen, O lord of the universe: my prayer is that I should die at the hands of none save monkeys and men." "So be it; you have done great penance." This was the boon Brahmā and I granted to him (said Śiva). The Creator then approached Kumbhakarṇa and was astonished to see his gigantic form. Brahmā said to himself, "Should this wretch have his daily repast, the whole world will be laid waste." So Brahmā directed Śāradā, who changed his mind. Accordingly the demon asked for continued sleep, extending over six months (1—4)

दो०—गए बिभीषन पास पुनि कहेउ पुत्र बर मागु।
तेहिं मागेउ भगवंत पद कमल अमल अनुरागु ॥ १७७ ॥

Last of all Brahmā went up to Vibhīṣaṇa and said. "Ask a boon, my son." He asked for pure love for the lotus feet of the Lord. (177)

चौ०—तिन्हहि देइ बर ब्रह्म सिधाए । हरषित ते अपने गृह आए ॥
मय तनुजा मंदोदरि नामा । परम सुंदरी नारि ललामा ॥ १ ॥
सोइ मयँ दीन्हि रावनहि आनी । होइहि जातुधानपति जानी ॥
हरषित भयउ नारि भलि पाई । पुनि दोउ बंधु बिआहेसि जाई ॥ २ ॥
गिरि त्रिकूट एक सिंधु मझारी । बिधि निर्मित दुर्गम अति भारी ॥
सोइ मय दानवँ बहुरि सँवारा । कनक रचित मनिभवन अपारा ॥ ३ ॥
भोगावति जसि अहिकुल बासा । अमरावति जसि सक्रनिवासा ॥
तिन्ह तें अधिक रम्य अति बंका । जग बिख्यात नाम तेहि लंका ॥ ४ ॥

Having granted them boons Brahmā went away, while they returned to their home rejoicing. The demon Maya had a daughter, Mandodarī by name, who was exceedingly beautiful, a jewel of womankind. Maya brought and made her over to Rāvaṇa, knowing that the latter was going to become the lord of the demons. Delighted at having obtained such a good wife, Rāvaṇa next went and married his two brothers. On a three-peaked mountain called Trikūṭa in the middle of the ocean there stood a very large fortress built by Brahmā himself. The demon Maya (who was a great architect) renovated it. It contained numberless palaces of gold and jewels, and was more beautiful and charming than Bhogāvatī (the capital of Pātāla, the nethermost region in the core of the globe), the city of the serpents, and Amarāvatī, the capital of Indra (the lord of paradise). It was known throughout the world by the name of Lankā. (1—4)

दो०—खाईं सिंधु गभीर अति चारिहुँ दिसि फिरि आव ।
कनक कोट मनिखचित दृढ़ बरनि न जाइ बनाव ॥ १७८ (क) ॥
हरि प्रेरित जेहिं कलप जोइ जातुधानपति होइ ।
सूर प्रतापी अतुलबल दल समेत बस सोइ ॥ १७८ (ख) ॥

The ocean surrounded it on all sides as a very deep moat. It had a strong fortification wall built of gold and jewels, the architectural beauty of which defied description. Whoever was preordained by Śrī Hari to be the chief of the demons in a particular cycle, that illustrious hero of incomparable might lived there with his army. (178 A-B)

चौ०—रहे तहाँ निसिचर भट भारे । ते सब सुरन्ह समर संघारे ॥
अब तहँ रहहिं सक्र के प्रेरे । रच्छक कोटि जच्छपति केरे ॥ १ ॥
दसमुख कतहुँ खबरि असि पाई । सेन साजि गढ़ घेरेसि जाई ॥
देखि बिकट भट बड़ि कटकाई । जच्छ जीव लै गए पराई ॥ २ ॥
फिरि सब नगर दसानन देखा । गयउ सोच सुख भयउ बिसेषा ॥
सुंदर सहज अगम अनुमानी । कीन्हि तहाँ रावन रजधानी ॥ ३ ॥

जेहि जस जोग बाँटि गृह दीन्हे । सुखी सकल रजनीचर कीन्हे ॥
एक बार कुबेर पर धावा । पुष्पक जान जीति लै आवा ॥ ४ ॥

Great demon warriors had been living there. They were all exterminated in battle by the gods. Now under Indra's commission it was occupied by a garrison consisting of ten million guards of Kubera (the chief of the Yakṣas). Having obtained this news from some quarter Rāvaṇa marshalled his army and besieged the fortress. Seeing his vast force of fierce warriors, the Yakṣas fled for their lives Thereupon Rāvaṇa surveyed the whole city; he was much pleased with what he saw and all his anxiety (about a suitable capital) was gone. Perceiving that the city was naturally beautiful and accessible for others, Rāvaṇa fixed his capital there. By assigning quarters to his followers according to their several deserts he made them all happy. On one occasion he led an expedition against Kubera and carried away his aerial car known by the name of Puṣpaka as a trophy. (1—4)

दो०—कौतुकहीं कैलास पुनि लीन्हेसि जाइ उठाइ ।
मनहुँ तौलि निज बाहुबल चला बहुत सुख पाइ ॥ १७९ ॥

Again, in a sportive mood he went and lifted Mount Kailāsa and, thereby testing as it were the might of his arms, returned most jubilant. (179)

चौ०—सुख संपति सुत सेन सहाई । जय प्रताप बल बुद्धि बड़ाई ॥
नित नूतन सब बाढ़त जाई । जिमि प्रतिलाभ लोभ अधिकाई ॥ १ ॥
अतिबल कुंभकरन अस भ्राता । जेहि कहुँ नहिं प्रतिभट जग जाता ॥
करइ पान सोवइ षट मासा । जागत होइ तिहूँ पुर त्रासा ॥ २ ॥
जौं दिन प्रति अहार कर सोई । बिस्व बेगि सब चौपट होई ॥
समर धीर नहिं जाइ बखाना । तेहि सम अमित बीर बलवाना ॥ ३ ॥
बारिदनाद जेठ सुत तासू । भट महुँ प्रथम लीक जग जासू ॥
जेहि न होइ रन सनमुख कोई । सुरपुर नितहिं परावन होई ॥ ४ ॥

His happiness and prosperity, the number of his sons, his army and his allies, his victories and glory, his might, wisdom and fame grew from more to more every day even as avarice grows with each new gain. He had a stalwart brother like Kumbhakarṇa, a rival to whom was never born in this world. Drinking his fill he remained buried in sleep for six months, and at his waking the three worlds trembled. Were he to take his meals every day, the whole universe would soon have been ruined. He was unspeakably staunch in fight and there were numberless brave warriors who could be compared with him. Rāvaṇa's eldest son was Meghanāda, who ranked foremost among the champions of the world. Before him none could stand in battle. Due to him there was a stampede in the city of the immortals every day. (1—4)

दो०—कुमुख अकंपन कुलिसरद धूमकेतु अतिकाय ।
एक एक जग जीति सक ऐसे सुभट निकाय ॥ १८० ॥

There were many more champions such as the hideous Kumukha, the intrepid Akampana, Kuliśarada with teeth like thunderbolts, the fiery Dhūmaketu and the gigantic Atikāya, each one of whom was able to subdue the whole world (180)

चौ०—कामरूप जानहिं सब माया । सपनेहुँ जिन्ह कें धरम न दाया ॥
दसमुख बैठ सभाँ एक बारा । देखि अमित आपन परिवारा ॥ १ ॥
सुत समूह जन परिजन नाती । गनै को पार निसाचर जाती ॥
सेन बिलोकि सहज अभिमानी । बोला बचन क्रोध मद सानी ॥ २ ॥
सुनहु सकल रजनीचर जूथा । हमरे बैरी बिबुध बरूथा ॥
ते सनमुख नहिं करहिं लराई । देखि सबल रिपु जाहिं पराई ॥ ३ ॥
तेन्ह कर मरन एक बिधि होई । कहउँ बुझाइ सुनहु अब सोई ॥
द्विजभोजन मख होम सराधा । सब कै जाइ करहु तुम्ह बाधा ॥ ४ ॥

Taking form at will, they were skilled in all forms of demoniac Māyā (deceit); they never thought of piety or compassion even in dream One day the ten-headed Rāvaṇa was seated in court and reviewed his innumerable retainers, hosts of sons and grandsons, relatives and servants, troops of demons, more than anyone could count On seeing the host the naturally proud Rāvaṇa spoke words full of wrath and arrogance: "Listen, all demon troops· the host of heaven are my enemies. They never dare to stand up in open fight, but flee away at the sight of a powerful adversary. There is only one way of causing their death, which I tell you in detail; now listen to it. Go and prevent the feasting of Brāhmans, the performance of sacrifices, the pouring of oblations into the sacred fire, the ceremony of Śrāddha (offering food etc. to a departed soul) and all other religious functions (1—4)

दो०—छुधा छीन बलहीन सुर सहजेहिं मिलिहहिं आइ ।
तब मारिहउँ कि छाड़िहउँ भली भाँति अपनाइ ॥ १८१ ॥

"Emaciated with starvation and rendered weak, the gods will automatically surrender to me Then I will see whether I should kill them or let them go after subjecting them perfectly to my will." (181)

चौ०—मेघनाद कहुँ पुनि हँकरावा । दीन्ही सिख बलु बयरु बढ़ावा ॥
जे सुर समर धीर बलवाना । जिन्ह कें लरिबे कर अभिमाना ॥ १ ॥
तिन्हहि जीति रन आनेसु बाँधी । उठि सुत पितु अनुसासन काँधी ॥
एहि बिधि सबही अग्या दीन्ही । आपुनु चलेउ गदा कर लीन्ही ॥ २ ॥
चलत दसानन डोलति अवनी । गर्जत गर्भ स्रवहिं सुर रवनी ॥
रावन आवत सुनेउ सकोहा । देवन्ह तके मेरु गिरि खोहा ॥ ३ ॥
दिगपालन्ह के लोक सुहाए । सूने सकल दसानन पाए ॥
पुनि पुनि सिंघनाद करि भारी । देइ देवतन्ह गारि पचारी ॥ ४ ॥
रन मद मत्त फिरइ जग धावा । प्रतिभट खोजत कतहुँ न पावा ॥
रबि ससि पवन बरुन धनधारी । अगिनि काल जम सब अधिकारी ॥ ५ ॥

किंनर सिद्ध मनुज सुर नागा । हठि सबही के पंथहिं लागा ॥
ब्रह्मसृष्टि जहँ लगि तनुधारी । दसमुख बसबर्ती नर नारी ॥ ६ ॥
आयसु करहिं सकल भयभीता । नवहिं आइ नित चरन बिनीता ॥ ७ ॥

Then Rāvaṇa sent for Meghanāda and admonished him, inciting him to greater strength and hostility. "The gods who are staunch in battle, powerful and proud of their fighting skill, you should conquer in battle and bring them in chains." The son got up and bowed to the commands of his father In this way Rāvaṇa ordered all and himself sallied forth, club in hand. Even as the ten-headed Rāvaṇa marched, the earth shook and at his thundering call the spouses of gods miscarried. Hearing of Rāvaṇa's angry approach the gods themselves sought the caves of Mount Sumeru. When the ten-faced Rāvaṇa invaded the beautiful realms of the guardians of the ten quarters, he found them all desolate. Again and again he roared loudly like a lion and, challenging the gods to battle, scoffed at them. Mad with lust of blood he traversed the whole world in search of a combatant, but nowhere could he find anyone. The sun-god, the moon-god, the wind-god, the god of water, the gods of wealth and fire, the gods of time and death and all other gods entrusted with the governance of the world, Kinnaras, Siddhas, men, gods and Nāgas, all were wilfully harassed by him. All embodied beings in the creation of Brahmā, whether men or women, submitted to Rāvaṇa's will. All did his bidding out of fear and always bowed suppliantly at his feet. (1—7)

दो०—भुजबल बिस्व बस्य करि राखेसि कोउ न सुतंत्र ।
मंडलीक मनि रावन राज करइ निज मंत्र ॥ १८२ (क) ॥
देव जच्छ गंधर्ब नर किंनर नाग कुमारि ।
जीति बरीं निज बाहुबल बहु सुंदर बर नारि ॥ १८२ (ख) ॥

By his mighty arm he subdued the whole universe and left no one independent. The king of kings, Rāvaṇa, ruled according to his own will. He won by the might of his arms and wedded daughters of gods, Yakṣas, Gandharvas, human beings, Kinnaras and Nāgas and many other beautiful and excellent dames. (182 A-B)

चौ०—इंद्रजीत सन जो कछु कहेऊ । सो सब जनु पहिलेहिं करि रहेऊ ॥
प्रथमहिं जिन्ह कहुँ आयसु दीन्हा । तिन्ह कर चरित सुनहु जो कीन्हा ॥ १ ॥
देखत भीमरूप सब पापी । निसिचर निकर देव परितापी ॥
करहिं उपद्रव असुर निकाया । नाना रूप धरहिं करि माया ॥ २ ॥
जेहि बिधि होइ धर्म निर्मूला । सो सब करहिं बेद प्रतिकूला ॥
जेहिं जेहिं देस धेनु द्विज पावहिं । नगर गाउँ पुर आगि लगावहिं ॥ ३ ॥
सुभ आचरन कतहुँ नहिं होई । देव बिप्र गुरु मान न कोई ॥
नहिं हरिभगति जग्य तप ग्याना । सपनेहुँ सुनिअ न बेद पुराना ॥ ४ ॥

Whatever Rāvaṇa told Indrajit to do was done by him sooner as it were than the former uttered the command. Now hear what they did who had been ordered by him even earlier. The whole demon crew, sinful at heart and of

terrible aspect, were the torment of heaven. Roaming at night, they did outrages of various kinds and assumed diverse forms through their delusive power. They acted in every way contrary to Veda and did everything in their power to eradicate religion. Wherever they found a cow or a Brahman they set fire to that city, town or village. Virtuous acts were nowhere to be seen. No one paid any respect to the gods, the Brahmans and the spiritual preceptor. There was no devotion to Śrī Hari, no sacrificial performances, no austerities and no spiritual wisdom. No one would ever dream of listening to the Vedas or the Purāṇas. (1—4)

छं०—जप जोग बिरागा तप मख भागा श्रवन सुनइ दससीसा ।
आपुनु उठि धावइ रहै न पावइ धरि सब घालइ खीसा ॥
अस भ्रष्ट अचारा भा संसारा धर्म सुनिअ नहिं काना ।
तेहि बहु बिधि त्रासइ देस निकासइ जो कह बेद पुराना ॥

If ever any talk of Japa (muttering of sacred formulas), Yoga (subjugation of mind), dispassion, penance or of oblations to gods in a sacrifice entered Rāvaṇa's ears he would at once be on his feet and run to stop them. He would allow nothing of these and would destroy everything he laid his hands upon. There was such corruption in the world that no talk of piety could be heard anywhere. Whoever recited the Vedas or the Purāṇas was intimidated in manifold ways and sent into exile.

सो०—बरनि न जाइ अनीति घोर निसाचर जो करहिं ।
हिंसा पर अति प्रीति तिन्ह के पापहि कवनि मिति ॥ १८३ ॥

The terrible outrages the demons did beggar description. There is no limit to the evil-doings of those who hold violence most dear to their heart. (183)

[PAUSE 6 FOR A THIRTY-DAY RECITATION]

चौ०—बाढ़े खल बहु चोर जुआरा । जे लंपट परधन परदारा ॥
मानहिं मातु पिता नहिं देवा । साधुन्ह सन करवावहिं सेवा ॥ १ ॥
जिन्ह के यह आचरन भवानी । ते जानेहु निसिचर सब प्रानी ॥
अतिसय देखि धर्म कै ग्लानी । परम सभीत धरा अकुलानी ॥ २ ॥
गिरि सरि सिंधु भार नहिं मोही । जस मोहि गरुअ एक परद्रोही ॥
सकल धर्म देखइ बिपरीता । कहि न सकइ रावन भय भीता ॥ ३ ॥
धेनु रूप धरि हृदयँ बिचारी । गई तहाँ जहँ सुर मुनि झारी ॥
निज संताप सुनाएसि रोई । काहू तें कछु काज न होई ॥ ४ ॥

The number of villains, thieves and gamblers and of those who coveted others' wealth and wives swelled to a great extent. People honoured not their parents and gods and exacted service from pious souls. Those who act in this way, Bhavānī, know all such creatures as demons. Perceiving the supreme disrespect for religion, Earth was extremely alarmed and perturbed. "The weight of mountains, rivers and oceans," she said to herself, "is not so oppressive

to me as of him who is malevolent to others." She saw all goodness perverted, yet for fear of Rāvana she could not utter a word. After great deliberation she took the form of a cow and went to the spot where all gods and sages were in hiding. With tears in her eyes she told them her sufferings, but none of them could be of any help to her. (1—4)

छं०—सुर मुनि गंधर्बा मिलि करि सर्बा गे बिरंचि के लोका ।
सँग गोतनुधारी भूमि बिचारी परम बिकल भय सोका ॥
ब्रह्माँ सब जाना मन अनुमाना मोर कछू न बसाई ।
जा करि तैं दासी सो अबिनासी हमरेउ तोर सहाई ॥

The gods, sages and Gandharvas (celestial songsters), all repaired to Brahmā's abode; with them was poor Earth in the form of a cow grievously stricken with fear and grief. Brahmā came to know everything; and realizing in his heart of heart his inability to help her, he said, "The immortal Lord whose servant you are will be my help as well as yours."

सो०—धरनि धरहि मन धीर कह बिरंचि हरिपद सुमिरु ।
जानत जन की पीर प्रभु भंजिहि दारुन बिपति ॥ १८४ ॥

"Have patience, Earth," said Brahmā, "and fix your mind on the feet of Śrī Hari. The Lord knows the distress of His servants and will put an end to your terrible suffering." (184)

चौ०—बैठे सुर सब करहिं बिचारा । कहँ पाइअ प्रभु करिअ पुकारा ॥
पुर बैकुंठ जान कह कोई । कोउ कह पयनिधि बस प्रभु सोई ॥ १ ॥
जाके हृदयँ भगति जसि प्रीती । प्रभु तहँ प्रगट सदा तेहिं रीती ॥
तेहिं समाज गिरिजा मैं रहेऊँ । अवसर पाइ बचन एक कहेऊँ ॥ २ ॥
हरि ब्यापक सर्बत्र समाना । प्रेम तें प्रगट होहिं मैं जाना ॥
देस काल दिसि बिदिसिहु माहीं । कहहु सो कहाँ जहाँ प्रभु नाहीं ॥ ३ ॥
अग जगमय सब रहित बिरागी । प्रेम तें प्रभु प्रगटइ जिमि आगी ॥
मोर बचन सब के मन माना । साधु साधु करि ब्रह्म बखाना ॥ ४ ॥

All the gods sat in counsel: "Where can we find the Lord, so that we may appeal to Him?" Someone suggested that they should go to Vaikuṇṭha. Another said, "The Lord has His abode in the ocean of milk." The Lord always manifests Himself in response to the devotion and love one cherishes in one's heart. Girijā, I too happened to be in that assembly and took occasion to put in a word: "For aught I know Śrī Hari is present everywhere alike and is revealed only by love. Tell Me any place, time or quarter of the heaven where the Lord is not. Having taken the form of all creation, both animate and inanimate, He is yet destitute of everything and passionless, He is revealed by love even as fire is manifested by friction." My words found favour with all and Brahmā applauded me saying, "Well said, well said !" (1—4)

दो०—सुनि बिरंचि मन हरष तन पुलकि नयन बह नीर ।
अस्तुति करत जोरि कर सावधान मतिधीर ॥ १८५ ॥

Brahmā was glad at heart to hear My words the hair on his body bristled and tears flowed from his eyes. Recovering himself, the stable-minded Brahmā joined his palms and prayed:— (185)

छं०—जय जय सुरनायक जन सुखदायक प्रनतपाल भगवंता ।
गो द्विज हितकारी जय असुरारी सिंधुसुता प्रिय कंता ॥
पालन सुर धरनी अद्भुत करनी मरम न जानइ कोई ।
जो सहज कृपाला दीनदयाला करउ अनुग्रह सोई ॥ १ ॥
जय जय अबिनासी सब घट बासी ब्यापक परमानंदा ।
अबिगत गोतीतं चरित पुनीतं मायारहित मुकुंदा ॥
जेहि लागि बिरागी अति अनुरागी बिगतमोह मुनिबृंदा ।
निसि बासर ध्यावहिं गुनगन गावहिं जयति सच्चिदानंदा ॥ २ ॥
जेहिं सृष्टि उपाई त्रिबिध बनाई संग सहाय न दूजा ।
सो करउ अघारी चिंत हमारी जानिअ भगति न पूजा ॥
जो भव भय भंजन मुनि मन रंजन गंजन बिपति बरूथा ।
मन बच क्रम बानी छाड़ि सयानी सरन सकल सुर जूथा ॥ ३ ॥
सारद श्रुति सेषा रिषय असेषा जा कहुँ कोउ नहिं जाना ।
जेहि दीन पिआरे बेद पुकारे द्रवउ सो श्रीभगवाना ॥
भव बारिधि मंदर सब बिधि सुंदर गुनमंदिर सुखपुंजा ।
मुनि सिद्ध सकल सुर परम भयातुर नमत नाथ पद कंजा ॥ ४ ॥

Glory, all glory to You, O Lord of immortals. O delight of the devotees, O protector of the suppliant, O benefactor of cows and the Brahmans, O slayer of demons, O beloved consort of Lakṣmī (daughter of the ocean), glory to You. O guardian of gods and the earth, mysterious are Thy ways: their secret is known to none. Let Him who is benevolent by nature and compassionate to the humble show His grace. Glory, all glory to the immortal Lord Mukunda (the bestower of salvation and love), who resides in all hearts, is supreme bliss personified, who is omnipresent, unknowable, and supersensuous, whose acts are holy and who is beyond the veil of Māyā (illusion). Glory to Him who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss combined, who is most lovingly meditated upon day and night and whose praises are sung by multitudes of sages who are full of dispassion and entirely free from infatuation. Let the Slayer of the sinful Agha bestow His care on us,—He who brought forth the threefold creation (viz., that which is dominated by Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, viz., gods, men and demons) without anyone else to assist Him; we know neither

devotion nor worship. He who disperses the fear of transmigration, delights the mind of sages and puts an end to hosts of calamities, we gods betake ourselves to Him in thought, word and deed, giving up our wonted cleverness. The Lord, who is known neither to Śāradā (the goddess of learning), nor to the Vedas, nor again to Śeṣa (the serpent-god), nor to any of the sages, who as the Vedas proclaim loves the lowly, let Him be moved to pity. The sages, Siddhas (a class of celestials naturally endowed with supernatural powers) and all gods, grievously stricken with fear, bow at the lotus feet of the Lord who serves as Mount Mandara for churning the ocean of worldly existence, who is charming in every way, who is an abode of virtues and an embodiment of bliss. (1—4)

दो०—जानि सभय सुर भूमि सुनि बचन समेत सनेह ।
गगनगिरा गंभीर भइ हरनि सोक संदेह ॥ १८६ ॥

Knowing that the gods and Earth were terror-stricken and hearing their loving entreaties, a deep voice came from heaven, which removed all their doubt and anxiety: (186)

चौ०—जनि डरपहु मुनि सिद्ध सुरेसा । तुम्हहि लागि धरिहउँ नर बेसा ॥
अंसन्ह सहित मनुज अवतारा । लेहउँ दिनकर बंस उदारा ॥ १ ॥
कस्यप अदिति महातप कीन्हा । तिन्ह कहुँ मैं पूरब बर दीन्हा ॥
ते दसरथ कौसल्या रूपा । कोसलपुरीं प्रगट नरभूपा ॥ २ ॥
तिन्ह कें गृह अवतरिहउँ जाई । रघुकुलतिलक सो चारिउ भाई ॥
नारद बचन सत्य सब करिहउँ । परम सक्ति समेत अवतरिहउँ ॥ ३ ॥
हरिहउँ सकल भूमि गरुआई । निर्भय होहु देव समुदाई ॥
गगन ब्रह्मबानी सुनि काना । तुरत फिरे सुर हृदय जुड़ाना ॥ ४ ॥
तब ब्रह्माँ धरनिहि समुझावा । अभय भई भरोस जियँ आवा ॥ ५ ॥

"Fear not, O sages, Siddhas and Indra (the chief of gods); for your sake I will assume the form of a human being. In the glorious solar race I shall be born as a human being along with My part manifestations. The sage Kaśyapa and his wife Aditi did severe penance, to them I have already vouchsafed a boon. They have appeared in the city of Ayodhyā as rulers of men in the form of Daśaratha and Kausalyā. In their house I shall take birth in the form of four brothers, the ornament of Raghu's line. I shall justify all that was uttered by Nārada and shall descend with My Supreme Energy. In this way I shall relieve the earth of all its burden; be fearless, O gods." As the divine voice from heaven reached the gods' ears they returned forthwith with their heart soothed. Then Brahmā admonished Earth, who was rid of all fear and felt reassured in her heart. (1—5)

दो०—निज लोकहि बिरंचि गे देवन्ह इहइ सिखाइ ।
बानर तनु धरि धरि महि हरि पद सेवहु जाइ ॥ १८७ ॥

Then Brahmā proceeded to his realm after thus instructing the gods: "Assuming the form of monkeys you go to the earth and adore the feet of Śrī Hari." (187)

चौ०—गए देव सब निज निज धामा । भूमि सहित मन कहुँ बिश्रामा ॥
जो कछु आयसु ब्रह्माँ दीन्हा । हरषे देव बिलंब न कीन्हा ॥ १ ॥
बनचर देह धरी छिति माहीं । अतुलित बल प्रताप तिन्ह पाहीं ॥
गिरि तरु नख आयुध सब बीरा । हरि मारग चितवहिं मतिधीरा ॥ २ ॥
गिरि कानन जहँ तहँ भरि पूरी । रहे निज निज अनीक रचि रूरी ॥
यह सब रुचिर चरित मैं भाषा । अब सो सुनहु जो बीचहिं राखा ॥ ३ ॥
अवधपुरीं रघुकुलमनि राऊ । बेद बिदित तेहि दसरथ नाऊँ ॥
धरम धुरंधर गुननिधि ग्यानी । हृदयँ भगति मति सारँगपानी ॥ ४ ॥

All the gods went to their several abodes along with Earth; they all felt relieved in their heart. And the gods were delighted to receive the orders that Brahmā gave, and lost no time in carrying them out. They took the form of monkeys on earth; their might and glory were incomparable. They were all brave and had mountains, trees and nails for their weapons. Resolute of mind, they awaited the advent of Śrī Hari, swarming on mountains and in woods wherever they liked and dividing themselves into gallant troops of their own. I have related to you all this interesting account; now hear that which was interrupted before. In the city of Ayodhyā there ruled a king who was a jewel of Raghu's race; he was called Daśaratha, a name which is familiar in the Vedas. He was a champion of virtue, a repository of good qualities and a man of wisdom; he was a sincere devotee of God Viṣṇu (the wielder of the Śārṅga bow) and his mind was also set on Him. (1—4)

दो०—कौसल्यादि नारि प्रिय सब आचरन पुनीत ।
पति अनुकूल प्रेम दृढ़ हरि पद कमल बिनीत ॥ १८८ ॥

Kausalyā and his other beloved consorts were all of holy life; humble and devoted to their lord, they had a strong attachment to the lotus feet of Śrī Hari. (188)

चौ०—एक बार भूपति मन माहीं । भै गलानि मोरें सुत नाहीं ॥
गुर गृह गयउ तुरत महिपाला । चरन लागि करि बिनय बिसाला ॥ १ ॥
निज दुख सुख सब गुरहि सुनायउ । कहि बसिष्ठ बहु बिधि समुझायउ ॥
धरहु धीर होइहहिं सुत चारी । त्रिभुवन बिदित भगत भय हारी ॥ २ ॥
सृंगी रिषिहि बसिष्ठ बोलावा । पुत्रकाम सुभ जग्य करावा ॥
भगति सहित मुनि आहुति दीन्हें । प्रगटे अगिनि चरू कर लीन्हें ॥ ३ ॥
जो बसिष्ठ कछु हृदयँ बिचारा । सकल काजु भा सिद्ध तुम्हारा ॥
यह हबि बाँटि देहु नृप जाई । जथा जोग जेहि भाग बनाई ॥ ४ ॥

One day the king was sad at heart that he had no son. He hastened to his preceptor's residence and, falling at his feet, made many entreaties. He told the Guru all his joys and sorrows; the sage Vasiṣṭha comforted him in many ways and said, "Take heart and wait; you will have four sons, who will be known throughout the three worlds and will rid the devotees of their fears." Then

Vasiṣṭha summoned the sage Śṛṅgī and had a noble sacrifice performed by him for the birth of a son to the king. When the sage devoutly offered oblations into the sacred fire, the fire-god appeared with an offering of rice boiled with milk in his hand. Said the fire-god, "Whatever Vasiṣṭha has contemplated for you that object is fully accomplished. Take this oblation, O king, and divide it in such proportions as you think fit." (1—4)

दो०—तब अदृस्य भए पावक सकल सभहि समुझाइ ।
परमानंद मगन नृप हरष न हृदयँ समाइ ॥ १८९ ॥

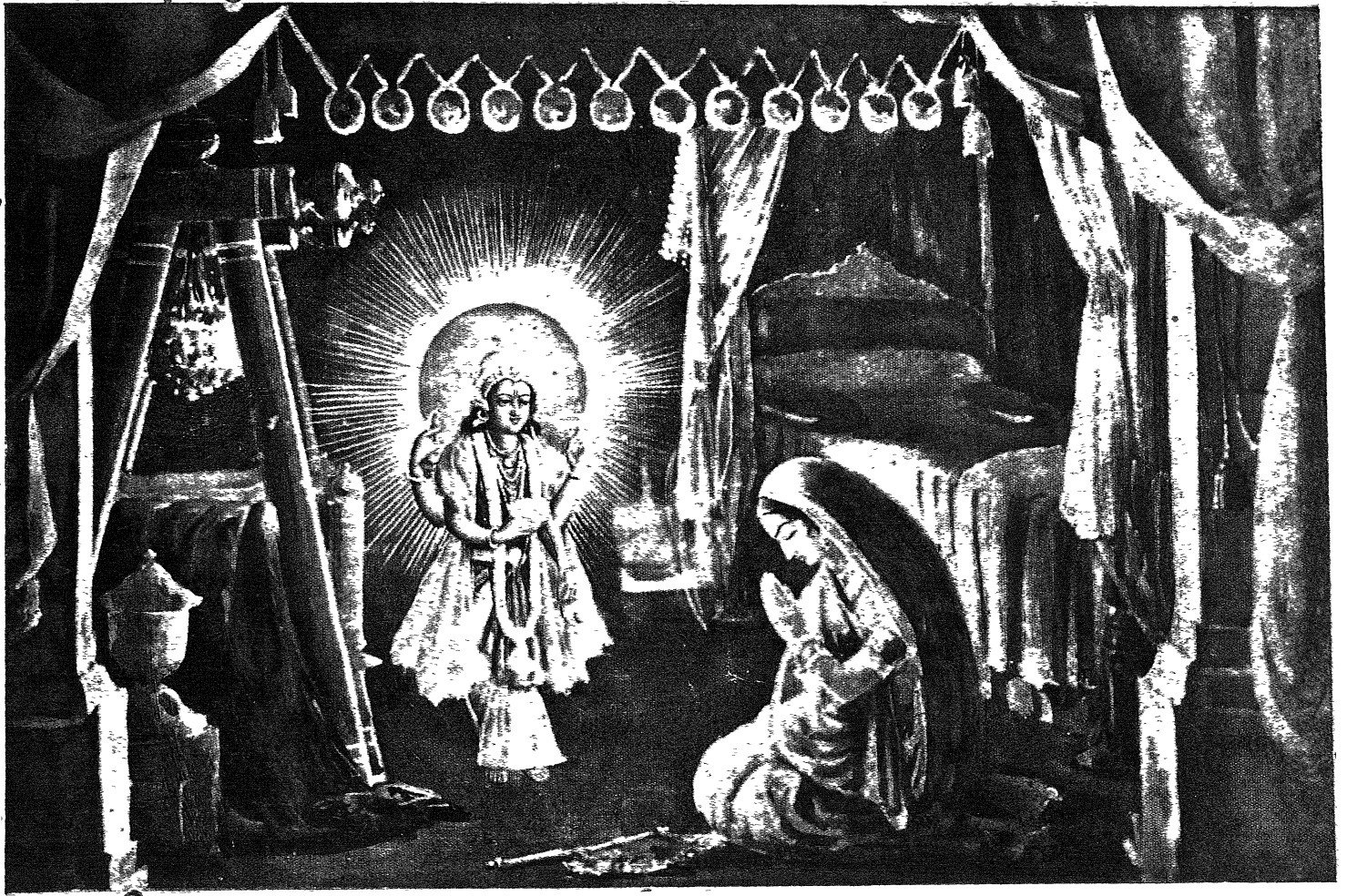
The fire-god then disappeared after telling the whole assembly of what was to be done. The king was transported with ecstasy and could not contain himself for joy. (189)

चौ०—तबहिं रायँ प्रिय नारि बोलाईं । कौसल्यादि तहाँ चलि आईं ॥
अर्ध भाग कौसल्यहि दीन्हा । उभय भाग आधे कर कीन्हा ॥ १ ॥
कैकेई कहँ नृप सो दयऊ । रह्यो सो उभय भाग पुनि भयऊ ॥
कौसल्या कैकेई हाथ धरि । दीन्ह सुमित्रहि मन प्रसन्न करि ॥ २ ॥
एहि बिधि गर्भसहित सब नारी । भईं हृदयँ हरषित सुख भारी ॥
जा दिन तें हरि गर्भहिं आए । सकल लोक सुख संपति छाए ॥ ३ ॥
मंदिर महँ सब राजहिं रानीं । सोभा सील तेज की खानीं ॥
सुख जुत कछुक काल चलि गयऊ । जेहिं प्रभु प्रगट सो अवसर भयऊ ॥ ४ ॥

The king at once sent for his beloved consorts. When Kausalyā and the other queens arrived there, he gave one half of the offering to Kausalyā and divided the other into two halves, one of which he gave to Kaikeyī. The remnant was again divided into two parts, which he placed in the hands of Kausalyā and Kaikeyī and after thus obtaining their approval handed both the shares to Sumitrā. In this way all the queens became pregnant They were all glad of heart and felt very happy. From the time Śrī Hari found His way into the womb joy and prosperity reigned in all the worlds. In the palace shone the queens, who were all mines of beauty, virtue and glory. Some time was thus happily spent, till the time arrived for the Lord to be revealed. (1—4)

दो०—जोग लगन ग्रह बार तिथि सकल भए अनुकूल ।
चर अरु अचर हर्षजुत राम जनम सुखमूल ॥ १९० ॥

The position of the sun and the moon, the zodiacal sign into which the sun had entered, the position of the seven other planets, the day of the week as well as the day of the lunar month, all these turned out to be propitious. And full of delight was all creation, animate and inanimate; for the birth of Śrī Rāma is the source of joy. (190)

चौ०—नौमी तिथि मधु मास पुनीता । सुकल पच्छ अभिजित हरिप्रीता ॥
मध्यदिवस अति सीत न घामा । पावन काल लोक बिश्रामा ॥ १ ॥

The Lord's Descent

सीतल मंद सुरभि बह बाऊ। हरषित सुर संतन मन चाऊ॥
बन कुसुमित गिरिगन मनिआरा। स्रवहिं सकल सरिताऽमृतधारा॥ २ ॥
सो अवसर बिरंचि जब जाना। चले सकल सुर साजि बिमाना॥
गगन बिमल संकुल सुर जूथा। गावहिं गुन गंधर्ब बरूथा॥ ३ ॥
बरषहिं सुमन सुअंजुलि साजी। गहगहि गगन दुंदुभी बाजी॥
अस्तुति करहिं नाग मुनि देवा। बहु बिधि लावहिं निज निज सेवा॥ ४ ॥

It was the ninth day of the bright half of the sacred month of Chaitra, the moon had entered the asterism named Abhijit, which is so dear to Śrī Hari The sun was at its meridian, the day was neither cold nor hot. It was a holy time which gave rest to the whole world A cool, soft and fragrant breeze was blowing. The gods were feeling exhilarated and the saints were bubbling with enthusiasm. The woods were full of blossoms, the mountains were resplendent with gems and every river flowed a stream of nectar. When Brahmā perceived that the time of Śrī Rāma's birth had approached, all the gods came out with their aerial cars duly equipped. The bright heaven was crowded with their hosts and troops of Gandharvas chanted praises and rained down flowers placing them in their beautiful palms. The sky resounded with the beat of kettledrums. Nāgas, sages and gods offered praises and tendered their services in manifold ways. (1—4)

दो०—सुर समूह बिनती करि पहुँचे निज निज धाम।
जगनिवास प्रभु प्रगटे अखिल लोक बिश्राम॥ १९१ ॥

Having offered their praises the gods returned to their several abodes, when the Lord, the abode of the universe and the solace of all creation, manifested Himself. (191)

छं०—भए प्रगट कृपाला दीनदयाला कौसल्या हितकारी।
हरषित महतारी मुनि मन हारी अद्भुत रूप बिचारी॥
लोचन अभिरामा तनु घनस्यामा निज आयुध भुज चारी।
भूषन बनमाला नयन बिसाला सोभासिंधु खरारी॥ १ ॥
कह दुइ कर जोरी अस्तुति तोरी केहि बिधि करौं अनंता।
माया गुन ग्यानातीत अमाना बेद पुरान भनंता॥
करुना सुख सागर सब गुन आगर जेहि गावहिं श्रुति संता।
सो मम हित लागी जन अनुरागी भयउ प्रगट श्रीकंता॥ २ ॥
ब्रह्मांड निकाया निर्मित माया रोम रोम प्रति बेद कहै।
मम उर सो बासी यह उपहासी सुनत धीर मति थिर न रहै॥
उपजा जब ग्याना प्रभु मुसुकाना चरित बहुत बिधि कीन्ह चहै।
कहि कथा सुहाई मातु बुझाई जेहि प्रकार सुत प्रेम लहै॥ ३ ॥

माता पुनि बोली सो मति डोली तजहु तात यह रूपा ।
कीजै सिसुलीला अति प्रियसीला यह सुख परम अनूपा ॥
सुनि वचन सुजाना रोदन ठाना होइ बालक सुरभूपा ।
यह चरित जे गावहिं हरिपद पावहिं ते न परहिं भवकूपा ॥ ४ ॥

The gracious Lord, who is compassionate to the lowly and the benefactor of Kausalyā, appeared. The thought of His marvellous form, which stole the heart of sages, filled the mother with joy. His body was dark as a cloud, the delight of all eyes; in His four arms He bore His characteristic emblems (a conch-shell, a discus, a club and a lotus). Adorned with jewels and a garland of sylvan flowers and endowed with large eyes, the Slayer of the demon Khara was an ocean of beauty. Joining both her palms the mother said, "O infinite Lord, how can I praise You!. The Vedas as well as the Purāṇas declare You as transcending Māyā, beyond attributes, above knowledge and beyond all measure. He who is sung by the Vedas and holy men as an ocean of mercy and bliss and the repository of all virtues, the same Lord of Lakṣmī, the lover of His devotees, has revealed Himself for my good. The Vedas proclaim that every pore of Your body contains multitudes of universes brought forth by Māyā. That such a Lord stayed in my womb—this amusing story staggers the mind of even men of wisdom." When the revelation came upon the mother, the Lord smiled; He would perform many a sportive act. Therefore He exhorted her by telling her the charming account of her previous birth so that she might love Him as her own child. The mother's mind was changed; she spoke again, "Give up this superhuman form and indulge in childish sports, which are so dear to a mother's heart, the joy that comes from such sports in unequalled in every way." Hearing these words the all-wise Lord of immortals became an infant and began to cry. Those who sing this lay (says Tulasīdāsa) attain to the abode of Śrī Hari and never fall into the well of mundane existence. (1—4)

दो०—बिप्र धेनु सुर संत हित लीन्ह मनुज अवतार ।
निज इच्छा निर्मित तनु माया गुन गो पार ॥ १९२ ॥

For the sake of Brahmans, cows, gods and saints, the Lord, who transcends Māyā and is beyond the three modes of Prakṛti (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas) as well as beyond the reach of the senses, took birth as a man assuming a form which is a product of His own will. (192)

चौ०—सुनि सिसु रुदन परम प्रिय बानी । संभ्रम चलि आईं सब रानी ॥
हरषित जहँ तहँ धाईं दासी । आनँद मगन सकल पुरबासी ॥ १ ॥
दसरथ पुत्रजन्म सुनि काना । मानहुँ ब्रह्मानंद समाना ॥
परम प्रेम मन पुलक सरीरा । चाहत उठन करत मति धीरा ॥ २ ॥
जाकर नाम सुनत सुभ होई । मोरें गृह आवा प्रभु सोई ॥
परमानंद पूरि मन राजा । कहा बोलाइ बजावहु बाजा ॥ ३ ॥
गुर बसिष्ठ कहँ गयउ हँकारा । आए द्विजन सहित नृपद्वारा ॥
अनुपम बालक देखेन्हि जाई । रूप रासि गुन कहि न सिराई ॥ ४ ॥

On hearing the most pleasing sound of the baby's cries all the queens came in a flurry. Maid-servants ran helter-skelter in great delight; all the people of the city were transported with joy. When the tidings of the birth of a son reached Daśaratha's ears he was drowned as it were in the ecstasy of absorption into Brahma. With a mind saturated with the highest love and with a body thrilling all over with joy he sought to rise, while attempting to recover his senses. "The same Lord, whose very Name brings blessings with It even when It reaches one's ears, has arrived at my house," he said to himself; and the thought filled his mind with supreme joy. Sending for musicians he said, "Play on your instruments." The preceptor Vasiṣṭha was also summoned and he called at the palace door, with a train of Brahmans. They all went and gazed upon the peerless babe, who was an embodiment of beauty and possessed excellences more than one could tell. (1—4)

दो०—नंदीमुख सराध करि जातकरम सब कीन्ह ।
हाटक धेनु बसन मनि नृप बिप्रन्ह कहँ दीन्ह ॥ १९३ ॥

After performing the Nāndīmukha Śrāddha* the king completed all the rites connected with the birth of a child and made gifts of gold, cows, raiment and jewels to the Brahmans, (193)

चौ०—ध्वज पताक तोरन पुर छावा । कहि न जाइ जेहि भाँति बनावा ॥
सुमनबृष्टि अकास तें होई । ब्रह्मानंद मगन सब लोई ॥ १ ॥
बृंद बृंद मिलि चलीं लोगाईं । सहज सिंगार किएँ उठि धाईं ॥
कनक कलस मंगल भरि थारा । गावत पैठहिं भूप दुआरा ॥ २ ॥
करि आरति नेवछावरि करहीं । बार बार सिसु चरनन्हि परहीं ॥
मागध सूत बंदिगन गायक । पावन गुन गावहिं रघुनायक ॥ ३ ॥
सर्बस दान दीन्ह सब काहूँ । जेहिं पावा राखा नहिं ताहूँ ॥
मृगमद चंदन कुंकुम कीचा । मची सकल बीथिन्ह बिच बीचा ॥ ४ ॥

The city was full of flags and banners and festal arches. It was decorated in a way which defies description. Showers of flowers dropped from heaven; everybody was rapt in the joy of absorption into Brahma. Women streamed forth in troops; they came running in their natural toilet. Carrying jars of gold and salvers full of auspicious articles, they entered the portals of the royal palace singing as they went along. Waving lights and passing offerings round and round over the child's head as an act of exorcism they threw themselves at the babe's feet again and again. Bards, minstrels, panegyrists and songsters chanted solemn praises of the Lord of Raghus. Everyone gave whatever one possessed; even he who received did not retain it. All the lanes of the city were muddy with pastes of musk, sandal and saffron. (1—4)

दो०—गृह गृह बाज बधाव सुभ प्रगटे सुषमा कंद ।
हरषवंत सब जहँ तहँ नगर नारि नर बृंद ॥ १९४ ॥

* A commemorative offering to the Manes preliminary to any joyous occasion, such as investiture with the sacred thread, wedding etc.

There was happy music of festivity in every house, for the very Fountain of beauty had manifested Himself. All the men and women of the city were full of joy everywhere. (194)

चौ०—कैकयसुता सुमित्रा दोऊ । सुंदर सुत जनमत मैं ओऊ ॥
वह सुख संपति समय समाजा । कहि न सकइ सारद अहिराजा ॥ १ ॥
अवधपुरी सोहइ एहि भाँती । प्रभुहि मिलन आई जनु राती ॥
देखि भानु जनु मन सकुचानी । तदपि बनी संध्या अनुमानी ॥ २ ॥
अगर धूप बहु जनु अँधिआरी । उड़इ अबीर मनहुँ अरुनारी ॥
मंदिर मनि समूह जनु तारा । नृप गृह कलस सो इंदु उदारा ॥ ३ ॥
भवन बेदधुनि अति मृदु बानी । जनु खग मुखर समयँ जनु सानी ॥
कौतुक देखि पतंग भुलाना । एक मास तेइँ जात न जाना ॥ ४ ॥

Kaikeyī and Sumitrā each gave birth to a lovely boy. The joy, grandeur, solemnity of the occasion and the concourse of men were more than what Śāradā and the serpent-king could describe. The city of Ayodhyā wore a galla appearance; it looked as if Night had come to see the Lord and, feeling abashed as it were at the sight of the sun (her own lord), had deliberately stayed over in the form of twilight. Clouds of incense represented the dusk; and handfuls of red powder tossed up and wafted in the air represented the reddish light of sunset. The hosts of jewels that gleamed on house-tops looked like so many stars; while the round pinnacle on the top of the royal palace corresponded to the beautiful moon. The murmuring sound of the chanting of Veda in the palace resembled the chirping of birds appropriate to the occasion. Gazing upon this spectacle the sun forgot himself; a whole month passed without his knowing it. (1—4)

दो०—मास दिवस कर दिवस भा मरम न जानइ कोइ ।
रथ समेत रबि थाकेउ निसा कवन बिधि होइ ॥ १९५ ॥

The day assumed the length of a month; but no one could understand the mystery. The sun stood motionless with his chariot; how could there be any night? (195)

चौ०—यह रहस्य काहूँ नहिं जाना । दिनमनि चले करत गुनगाना ॥
देखि महोत्सव सुर मुनि नागा । चले भवन बरनत निज भागा ॥ १ ॥
औरउ एक कहउँ निज चोरी । सुनु गिरिजा अति दृढ़ मति तोरी ॥
काकभुसुंडि संग हम दोऊ । मनुजरूप जानइ नहिं कोऊ ॥ २ ॥
परमानंद प्रेमसुख फूले । बीथिन्ह फिरहिं मगन मन भूले ॥
यह सुभ चरित जान पै सोई । कृपा राम कै जापर होई ॥ ३ ॥
तेहि अवसर जो जेहि बिधि आवा । दीन्ह भूप जो जेहि मन भावा ॥
गज रथ तुरग हेम गो हीरा । दीन्हे नृप नानाबिधि चीरा ॥ ४ ॥

Nobody noticed this strange phenomenon; the sun at last moved ahead singing the praises of Śrī Rāma as he went. Witnessing the great

festival the gods, sages and Nāgas proceeded to their several abodes congratulating themselves on their good luck. I tell you one more covert act of Mine; listen to it, O Girijā, for I know your steadfast faith. The sage Kākabhuśuṇḍi and Myself both were there together in human form without anyone knowing it. Elated with supreme joy and the delight of love we roamed about the streets in ecstasy forgetting ourselves. He alone who enjoyed Śrī Rāma's grace could be apprised of this blessed adventure of ours. On that occasion the king granted the desire of everyone's heart, in whatever manner one came He bestowed elephants, chariots, horses, gold, cows, diamonds and costumes of various kinds. (1—4)

दो०—मन संतोषे सबन्हि के जहँ तहँ देहिं असीस
सकल तनय चिर जीवहुँ तुलसिदास के ईस ॥ १९६ ॥

All were satisfied in their heart and invoked blessings here and there, saying, "May all the sons of Daśaratha live long, those Lords of Tulasīdāsa." (196)

चौ०—कछुक दिवस बीते एहि भाँती । जात न जानिअ दिन अरु राती ॥
नामकरन कर अवसरु जानी । भूप बोलि पठए मुनि ग्यानी ॥ १ ॥
करि पूजा भूपति अस भाषा । धरिअ नाम जो मुनि गुनि राखा ॥
इन्ह के नाम अनेक अनूपा । मैं नृप कहब स्वमति अनुरूपा ॥ २ ॥
जो आनंद सिंधु सुख रासी । सीकर तें त्रैलोक सुपासी ॥
सो सुख धाम राम अस नामा । अखिल लोक दायक बिश्रामा ॥ ३ ॥
बिस्व भरन पोषन कर जोई । ताकर नाम भरत अस होई ॥
जाके सुमिरन तें रिपु नासा । नाम सत्रुहन बेद प्रकासा ॥ ४ ॥

A few days rolled on in this way; days and nights passed unnoticed. Knowing that the time had come for naming the children, the king sent for the enlightened sage Vasiṣṭha After paying him homage the king spoke to him thus, "Holy sir ! Kindly assign them names that you have fixed your mind upon." "Their names are many and unique; yet, O king, I will declare them according to my own lights. This eldest boy of yours, who is an ocean of felicity and embodiment of joy, a particle of which fills the three worlds with delight, has for His name 'Rāma', the very home of bliss and the comforter of all the worlds. Your second son, who sustains and supports the universe, will be called 'Bharata'; while he whose very thought destroys one's enemies is celebrated in the Vedas by the name of 'Śatrughna'." (1—4)

दो०—लच्छन धाम राम प्रिय सकल जगत आधार ।
गुरु बसिष्ठ तेहि राखा लछिमन नाम उदार ॥ १९७ ॥

He who is the abode of noble characteristics, the beloved of Śrī Rāma and the mainstay of the whole universe, was given by Guru Vasiṣṭha the splendid name of Lakṣmaṇa. (197)

चौ०—धरे नाम गुर हृदयँ बिचारी । बेद तत्व नृप तव सुत चारी ॥
मुनि धन जन सरबस सिव प्राना । बाल केलि रस तेहिं सुख माना ॥ १ ॥

बारेहि ते निज हित पति जानी । लछिमन राम चरन रति मानी ॥
भरत सत्रुहन दूनउ भाई । प्रभु सेवक जसि प्रीति बड़ाई ॥ २ ॥
स्याम गौर सुंदर दोउ जोरी । निरखहिं छबि जननीं तृन तोरी ॥
चारिउ सील रूप गुन धामा । तदपि अधिक सुखसागर रामा ॥ ३ ॥
हृदयँ अनुग्रह इंदु प्रकासा । सूचत किरन मनोहर हासा ॥
कबहुँ उछंग कबहुँ बर पलना । मातु दुलारइ कहि प्रिय ललना ॥ ४ ॥

The preceptor assigned these names after careful thought and then said, "Your four sons, O king, are the essence of Veda itself. Of them Śrī Rāma is the sages' treasure, the devotee's all in all and Śiva's very life; He takes delight at present in the rapture of childish sports". From his earliest days Lakṣmaṇa came to look upon Śrī Rāma as his benefactor and master and conceived devotion to His feet. The love that existed between the two half-brothers, Bharata and Śatrughna, was as glorious as that which obtains between a master and his servant. As the mothers gazed on the beauty of the two lovely pairs, one of whom was dark, the other fair, they would break a blade of grass in order to avert the evil eye. Although all the four brothers were embodiments of amiability, beauty and goodness, yet Śrī Rāma was an ocean of bliss *par excellence.* In His heart shone the moon of grace and His captivating smile represented its rays. Now on her lap and now in the beautiful cradle, the mother fondled Him calling Him her own darling. (1—4)

दो०—ब्यापक ब्रह्म निरंजन निर्गुन बिगत बिनोद ।
सो अज प्रेम भगति बस कौसल्या कें गोद ॥ १९८ ॥

The unborn and all-pervading Brahma, who is untainted by Māyā, without attributes and devoid of play, has sought shelter in the arms of Kausalyā, conquered by her love and devotion. (198)

चौ०—काम कोटि छबि स्याम सरीरा । नील कंज बारिद गंभीरा ॥
अरुन चरन पंकज नख जोती । कमल दलन्हि बैठे जनु मोती ॥ १ ॥
रेख कुलिस ध्वज अंकुस सोहे । नूपुर धुनि सुनि मुनि मन मोहे ॥
कटि किंकिनी उदर त्रय रेखा । नाभि गभीर जान जेहिं देखा ॥ २ ॥
भुज बिसाल भूषन जुत भूरी । हियँ हरि नख अति सोभा रूरी ॥
उर मनिहार पदिक की सोभा । बिप्र चरन देखत मन लोभा ॥ ३ ॥
कंबु कंठ अति चिबुक सुहाई । आनन अमित मदन छबि छाई ॥
दुइ दुइ दसन अधर अरुनारे । नासा तिलक को बरनै पारे ॥ ४ ॥
सुंदर श्रवन सुचारु कपोला । अति प्रिय मधुर तोतरे बोला ॥
चिक्कन कच कुंचित गभुआरे । बहु प्रकार रचि मातु सँवारे ॥ ५ ॥
पीत झगुलिआ तनु पहिराई । जानु पानि बिचरनि मोहि भाई ॥
रूप सकहिं नहिं कहि श्रुति सेषा । सो जानइ सपनेहुँ जेहिं देखा ॥ ६ ॥

His dark form, which resembles a blue lotus and a heavy rain-cloud, possessed the beauty of millions of Cupids. The nails glistened on His red

lotus-like feet as if pearls had been set on the petals of a rosy lotus. Marks of a thunderbolt, a flag and a goad shone on His soles and the tinkling of His anklets enraptured the heart of sages. A string of tiny bells girdled His waist and there were three folds in His belly, the depth of His navel is known to him alone who has perceived it. His long arms were adorned with a number of ornaments and the tiger's claw hanging on his breast possessed an exquisite beauty. The elegance of the necklace of gems with a diamond at the lowest end and the print of the Brahman's foot* fascinated one's mind. His neck resembled a conch-shell in its spiral shape and the chin looked most beautiful; while His face flushed with the beauty of countless Cupids. Pairs of small teeth were veiled by rosy lips and His beautiful nose and the sectarian mark on His brow defied description. With charming ears and most lovely cheeks His sweet lisping prattle was most delightful to hear. The smooth and curly hair that had never been trimmed since His very birth had been beautifully dressed in manifold ways by the mother. A yellow frock covered His body and His crawling on knees and hands was most pleasing to Me. The elegance of His form was something which even the Vedas and Śeṣa (the serpent-god) could not describe, it is known to him alone who has beheld it even in a dream.

(1—6)

दो०—सुख संदोह मोहपर ग्यान गिरा गोतीत ।
दंपति परम प्रेम बस कर सिसुचरित पुनीत ॥ १९९ ॥

The all-blissful Lord, who is above delusion and transcends knowledge, speech and all sensuous perception, sported like an innocent child, yielding to the supreme love of the royal couple (Daśaratha and Kausalyā) (199)

चौ०—एहि बिधि राम जगत पितु माता । कोसलपुर बासिन्ह सुखदाता ॥
जिन्ह रघुनाथ चरन रति मानी । तिन्ह की यह गति प्रगट भवानी ॥ १ ॥
रघुपति बिमुख जतन कर कोरी । कवन सकइ भव बंधन छोरी ॥
जीव चराचर बस कै राखे । सो माया प्रभु सों भय भाखे ॥ २ ॥

* Once upon a time there was a discussion among the sages as to which of the three Lords of creation; viz. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva was the greatest. In order to put the matter to the test Brahmā's son Bhṛgu was deputed to visit the three divinities one by one. Bhṛgu first approached his own father and did not bow to him as a dutiful son. This enraged Brahmā: but he somehow managed to curb his anger by force of reason. From Brahmā's court the sage went to Kailāsa. The god of gods, Śankara, rose to greet the sage and stretched His arms to embrace him. But Bhṛgu avoided His touch saying, "Touch me not, since you have broken social conventions and flouted the injunctions of the Vedas." Śiva lost His temper when He heard these aspersions. Taking up His trident He proceeded to strike the sage; but Goddess Pārvatī intervened and pacified Him. Thereafter Bhṛgu went to Vaikuṇṭha, the abode of Bhagavān Viṣṇu, and found the Lord reposing with His head on the lap of Śrī Lakṣmī. Breaking into His room unceremoniously the sage suddenly kicked Him on the chest. The almighty Lord quickly rose with Śrī Lakṣmī, alighted from His bed and, offering him homage, asked his forgiveness for the incivility shown to him by not welcoming him in advance. The Lord then rubbed the sage's foot saying that it might have been hurt by striking against His hard breast. Since then the Lord has ever borne on His bosom the print of the sage's foot as a mark of honour and it stands as an abiding monument to His unequalled forbearance.

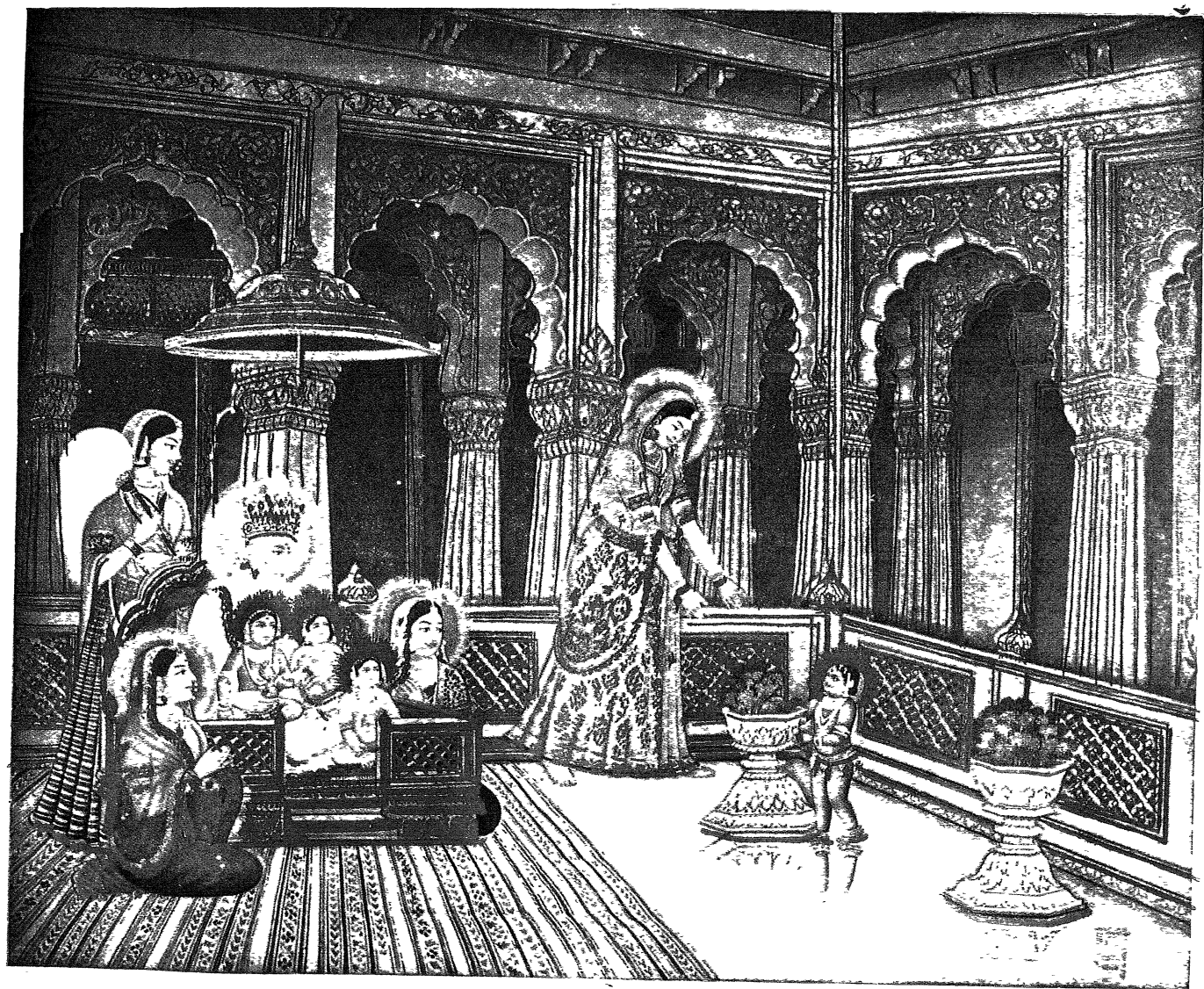
भृकुटि बिलास नचावइ ताही । अस प्रभु छाड़ि भजिअ कहु काही ॥
मन क्रम बचन छाड़ि चतुराई । भजत कृपा करिहहिं रघुराई ॥ ३ ॥
एहि बिधि सिसुबिनोद प्रभु कीन्हा । सकल नगरबासिन्ह सुख दीन्हा ॥
लै उछंग कबहुँक हलरावै । कबहुँ पालनें घालि झुलावै ॥ ४ ॥

In this way Śrī Rāma, the father and mother of the universe, delighted the people of Ayodhyā. Bhavānī, this demonstrates how those who have conceived devotion to the feet of the Lord of Raghus are repaid by Him. On the other hand, no one can liberate from the bondage of worldly existence him who is averse to the Lord of Raghus, however much he may struggle. Even that Māyā which has held under her sway all living beings, both animate and inanimate, trembles before the Lord, who makes her dance to the play of His eye-brows. Leaving such a lord, tell me, whom should we adore? The Lord of Raghus will compassionate those who betake themselves to Him in thought, word and deed, giving up all cleverness. In this way the Lord sported as a child, to the delight of all the people of the city. The mother would now dandle Him in her arms, and now put Him down and rock Him in the cradle. (1—4)

दो०—प्रेम मगन कौसल्या निसि दिन जात न जान ।
सुत सनेह बस माता बालचरित कर गान ॥ २०० ॥

Kausalyā remained so rapt in love that days and nights passed unnoticed. Out of affection for her boy she would sing lays of His childhood. (200)

चौ०—एक बार जननीं अन्हवाए । करि सिंगार पलनाँ पौढ़ाए ॥
निज कुल इष्टदेव भगवाना । पूजा हेतु कीन्ह अस्नाना ॥ १ ॥
करि पूजा नैबेद्य चढ़ावा । आपु गई जहँ पाक बनावा ॥
बहुरि मातु तहवाँ चलि आई । भोजन करत देख सुत जाई ॥ २ ॥
गै जननी सिसु पहिं भयभीता । देखा बाल तहाँ पुनि सूता ॥
बहुरि आइ देखा सुत सोई । हृदयँ कंप मन धीर न होई ॥ ३ ॥
इहाँ उहाँ दुइ बालक देखा । मतिभ्रम मोर कि आन बिसेषा ॥
देखि राम जननी अकुलानी । प्रभु हँसि दीन्ह मधुर मुसुकानी ॥ ४ ॥

One day, mother Kausalyā washed and adorned her boy and put Him to sleep in the cradle. Thereafter she bathed herself in order to worship the patron deity of her family. Having worshipped the deity she offered Him food and then returned to the kitchen. When she came back to the place of worship, she beheld her boy eating the food that had been offered to the Lord. Frightened at this, the mother went to her boy and found Him asleep in the nursery. Coming back once more to the temple she still saw the boy there. She now trembled with fear and her mind found no rest. She saw two boys, one in the temple and the other in the nursery. She said to herself, "Is it my mental illusion or some other unusual phenomenon?" When Śrī Rāma saw His mother perplexed, the Lord gently smiled. (1—4)

The Delight of Daśaratha

दो०—देखरावा मातहि निज अद्भुत रूप अखंड ।
रोम रोम प्रति लागे कोटि कोटि ब्रह्मंड ॥ २०१ ॥

The Lord then revealed to His mother His marvellous infinite form, every pore of whose skin contained millions of universes. (201)

चौ०—अगनित रबि ससि सिव चतुरानन । बहु गिरि सरित सिंधु महि कानन ॥
काल कर्म गुन ग्यान सुभाऊ । सोउ देखा जो सुना न काऊ ॥ १ ॥
देखी माया सब बिधि गाढ़ी । अति सभीत जोरें कर ठाढ़ी ॥
देखा जीव नचावइ जाही । देखी भगति जो छोरइ ताही ॥ २ ॥
तन पुलकित मुख बचन न आवा । नयन मूदि चरननि सिरु नावा ॥
बिसमयवंत देखि महतारी । भए बहुरि सिसुरूप खरारी ॥ ३ ॥
अस्तुति करि न जाइ भय माना । जगत पिता मैं सुत करि जाना ॥
हरि जननी बहु बिधि समुझाई । यह जनि कतहुँ कहसि सुनु माई ॥ ४ ॥

She saw therein countless suns and moons, Śivas and four-faced Brahmās, and a number of mountains, rivers, oceans, plains and woods, as well as the spirit of time, the principle of action, the modes of Prakṛti (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas), the spirit of knowledge and Nature and many more things of which she had never heard before. She further perceived Māyā, who is powerful in every respect, stricken with terror and standing with her palms joined together. The mother also beheld the embodied soul, who is made to dance by Māyā, and even so the spirit of devotion, which liberates the soul. The hair on the mother's body bristled and she stood speechless Closing her eyes she bowed her head at the Lord's feet. Seeing the mother struck with wonder the Slayer of Khara assumed the form of a child again. She was unable to utter praises and trembled at the thought that she had looked upon the Father of the universe as her own child. Śrī Hari comforted His mother in many ways and said, "Listen, My mother: do not reveal this fact anywhere." (1—4)

दो०—बार बार कौसल्या बिनय करइ कर जोरि ।
अब जनि कबहूँ ब्यापै प्रभु मोहि माया तोरि ॥ २०२ ॥

Joining her palms Kausalyā prayed again and again, "See, my lord, that Your Māyā no longer casts her spell on me." (202)

चौ०—बालचरित हरि बहु बिधि कीन्हा । अति अनंद दासन्ह कहँ दीन्हा ॥
कछुक काल बीतें सब भाई । बड़े भए परिजन सुखदाई ॥ १ ॥
चूड़ाकरन कीन्ह गुरु जाई । बिप्रन्ह पुनि दछिना बहु पाई ॥
परम मनोहर चरित अपारा । करत फिरत चारिउ सुकुमारा ॥ २ ॥
मन क्रम बचन अगोचर जोई । दसरथ अजिर बिचर प्रभु सोई ॥
भोजन करत बोल जब राजा । नहिं आवत तजि बाल समाजा ॥ ३ ॥
कौसल्या जब बोलन जाई । ठुमुकु ठुमुकु प्रभु चलहिं पराई ॥
निगम नेति सिव अंत न पावा । ताहि धरै जननी हठि धावा ॥ ४ ॥
धूसर धूरि भरें तनु आए । भूपति बिहसि गोद बैठाए ॥ ५ ॥

Śrī Hari indulged in many kinds of childish sports to the great delight of His servants. After some time all the four brothers passed the stage of infancy, gladdening the inmates of the house. The preceptor then came and performed the ceremony of tonsure; and the Brahmans received handsome presents for officiating at the same. All the four noble princes moved about indulging in numerous plays, which were most delightful to look at. The Lord, who cannot be comprehended through mind, speech or action, sported in the courtyard of Daśaratha. When the king, while at dinner, called Him, He would not turn up, loth as he was to leave the company of His playmates. When Kausalyā went to call Him, the Lord would run away toddling. He whom the Vedas declare in negative terms and whose end even Śiva could not find, the mother ran to catch Him by force. With His body besmirched all over with dust, He came and the king smilingly took Him in his arms. (1–5)

दो०—भोजन करत चपल चित इत उत अवसरु पाइ ।
भाजि चले किलकत मुख दधि ओदन लपटाइ ॥ २०३ ॥

Even while the Lord sat at dinner, His mind was restless, so that the moment He got a chance He would run away hither and thither with a scream of delight, His mouth daubed with curds and rice. (203)

चौ०—बालचरित अति सरल सुहाए । सारद सेष संभु श्रुति गाए ॥
जिन्ह कर मन इन्ह सन नहिं राता । ते जन बंचित किए बिधाता ॥ १ ॥
भए कुमार जबहिं सब भ्राता । दीन्ह जनेऊ गुरु पितु माता ॥
गुरगृहँ गए पढ़न रघुराई । अलप काल बिद्या सब आई ॥ २ ॥
जाकी सहज स्वास श्रुति चारी । सो हरि पढ़ यह कौतुक भारी ॥
बिद्या बिनय निपुन गुन सीला । खेलहिं खेल सकल नृपलीला ॥ ३ ॥
करतल बान धनुष अति सोहा । देखत रूप चराचर मोहा ॥
जिन्ह बीथिन्ह बिहरहिं सब भाई । थकित होहिं सब लोग लुगाई ॥ ४ ॥

His charming and most innocent childish sports have been sung by Śāradā, Śeṣa, Śambhu and the Vedas. Those whose mind does not take delight in these have been deprived by Providence of a great good fortune. When all the four brothers attained to boyhood, the preceptor as well as their parents invested them with the sacred thread. The Lord of Raghus then proceeded to His preceptor's residence for study and in a short time mastered all the branches of knowledge. What a great fun that Śrī Hari, whose natural breath stands crystallized in the form of the four Vedas, should go to school. Proficient in learning and perfect in politeness, virtues and decorum, they played all the games imitating the role of a king. With an arrow and bow in the hands of each they appeared most charming; their beauty enraptured the whole creation, both animate and inanimate. Through whichever street the four brothers passed in pursuit of their sport, all the men and women there stood motionless on perceiving them. (1–4)

दो०—कोसलपुर बासी नर नारि बृद्ध अरु बाल ।
प्रानहु ते प्रिय लागत सब कहुँ राम कृपाल ॥ २०४ ॥

The people of Ayodhyā, men and women, elderly men as well as children, all held the gracious Rāma dearer than life (204)

चौ०—बंधु सखा सँग लेहिं बोलाई। बन मृगया नित खेलहिं जाई॥
पावन मृग मारहिं जियँ जानी। दिन प्रति नृपहि देखावहिं आनी॥१॥
जे मृग राम बान के मारे। ते तनु तजि सुरलोक सिधारे॥
अनुज सखा सँग भोजन करहीं। मातु पिता अग्या अनुसरहीं॥२॥
जेहि बिधि सुखी होहिं पुर लोगा। करहिं कृपानिधि सोइ संजोगा॥
बेद पुरान सुनहिं मन लाई। आपु कहहिं अनुजन्ह समुझाई॥३॥
प्रातकाल उठि कै रघुनाथा। मातु पिता गुरु नावहिं माथा॥
आयसु मागि करहिं पुर काजा। देखि चरित हरषइ मन राजा॥४॥

Calling his half-brothers and playmates Śrī Rāma would take them with Him and go out to the forest for hunting every day. He would deliberately kill only holy game and brought and showed the daily bag to the king. The beasts that were killed by Śrī Rāma's shaft went straight to heaven after death. He took His meals with His younger brothers and companions and obeyed the orders of His parents. He would always contrive means to delight the people of the city. He would listen to the Vedas and Purāṇas with rapt attention and would Himself expound the truths contained therein to His younger brothers. Rising at break of day the Lord of Raghus would bow His head to His parents and preceptor and, obtaining their permission, busied Himself with the affairs of the city. The king was glad at heart to see His noble acts. (1—4)

दो०—ब्यापक अकल अनीह अज निर्गुन नाम न रूप।
भगत हेतु नाना बिधि करत चरित्र अनूप॥२०५॥

The Lord, who is all-pervading, indivisible, desireless, unbegotten, attributeless and without name or form, performed marvellous acts of various kinds for the sake of His devotees. (205)

चौ०—यह सब चरित कहा मैं गाई। आगिलि कथा सुनहु मन लाई॥
बिस्वामित्र महामुनि ग्यानी। बसहिं बिपिन सुभ आश्रम जानी॥१॥
जहँ जप जग्य जोग मुनि करहीं। अति मारीच सुबाहुहि डरहीं॥
देखत जग्य निसाचर धावहिं। करहिं उपद्रव मुनि दुख पावहिं॥२॥
गाधितनय मन चिंता ब्यापी। हरि बिनु मरहिं न निसिचर पापी॥
तब मुनिबर मन कीन्ह बिचारा। प्रभु अवतरेउ हरन महि भारा॥३॥
एहूँ मिस देखौं पद जाई। करि बिनती आनौं दोउ भाई॥
ग्यान बिराग सकल गुन अयना। सो प्रभु मैं देखब भरि नयना॥४॥

All this story has been sung by me; now hear attentively what followed. The great enlightened hermit Viśwāmitra lived in a forest knowing it to be a sacred spot. There he practised Japa (muttering of sacred formulas) and Yoga (contemplation) and performed sacrifices; but he was much afraid of the demons Mārīcha and Subāhu. For as soon as they saw a sacrifice they would hasten

to desecrate it to the great chagrin of the sage, who felt disturbed in his mind and thought that the wicked Rākṣasas could not be disposed of without Śrī Hari. The great sage then said to himself, "The Lord has already taken birth in order to relieve the earth of its burden. Let me make the outrage of the demons an excuse for seeing His feet and after due entreaty bring the two brothers here I will regale my eyes with the sight of Him who is the abode of knowledge, dispassion and all virtues." (1—4)

दो०—बहुबिधि करत मनोरथ जात लागि नहिं बार ।
करि मज्जन सरऊ जल गए भूप दरबार ॥ २०६ ॥

Indulging in expectations of various kinds the sage took no time in reaching his destination. Bathing in the stream of the Sarayū he proceeded to the royal court. (206)

चौ०—मुनि आगमन सुना जब राजा । मिलन गयउ लै बिप्र समाजा ॥
करि दंडवत मुनिहि सनमानी । निज आसन बैठारेन्हि आनी ॥ १ ॥
चरन पखारि कीन्हि अति पूजा । मो सम आजु धन्य नहिं दूजा ॥
बिबिध भाँति भोजन करवावा । मुनिबर हृदयँ हरष अति पावा ॥ २ ॥
पुनि चरननि मेले सुत चारी । राम देखि मुनि देह बिसारी ॥
भए मगन देखत मुख सोभा । जनु चकोर पूरन ससि लोभा ॥ ३ ॥
तब मन हरषि बचन कह राऊ । मुनि अस कृपा न कीन्हिहु काऊ ॥
केहि कारन आगमन तुम्हारा । कहहु सो करत न लावउँ बारा ॥ ४ ॥
असुर समूह सतावहिं मोही । मैं जाचन आयउँ नृप तोही ॥
अनुज समेत देहु रघुनाथा । निसिचर बध मैं होब सनाथा ॥ ५ ॥

When the king heard of the sage's visit he went out to meet him with a party of Brahmans. Prostrating himself on the ground the king reverently brought him in and seated him on his own throne. Then, washing the sage's feet, he paid him great honours and said, "No one else is so blessed as I am today." The king next entertained him with various kinds of food and the great sage was much delighted at heart. He then placed his four sons on the latter's feet. At the sight of Śrī Rāma the sage forgot all about himself. He was enraptured as he gazed on the beauty of Śrī Rāma's countenance even as the *Chakora* bird is enamoured of the full moon. Gladdened at heart, the king then addressed the following words to him, "Reverend sir, you have never shown such grace to me before. Tell me what brings you here; I will carry out your order without delay." "Hosts of demons molest me, O king; I have therefore come to ask something of you. Let me have the Lord of Raghus, Śrī Rāma, with His younger brother (Lakṣmaṇa); with the extermination of the demons I will feel secure. (1—5)

दो०—देहु भूप मन हरषित तजहु मोह अग्यान ।
धर्म सुजस प्रभु तुम्ह कौं इन्ह कहँ अति कल्यान ॥ २०७ ॥

Daśaratha and Viśwāmitra

"Entrust them to me, O king, with a cheerful heart, let no infatuation or ignorance stand in your way. You will earn religious merit and fair renown thereby, and your sons will be highly blessed" (207)

चौ०—सुनि राजा अति अप्रिय बानी । हृदय कंप मुख दुति कुमुलानी ॥
चौथेंपन पायउँ सुत चारी । बिप्र बचन नहिं कहेहु बिचारी ॥ १ ॥
मागहु भूमि धेनु धन कोसा । सर्बस देउँ आजु सहरोसा ॥
देह प्रान तें प्रिय कछु नाहीं । सोउ मुनि देउँ निमिष एक माहीं ॥ २ ॥
सब सुत प्रिय मोहि प्रान कि नाईं । राम देत नहिं बनइ गोसाईं ॥
कहँ निसिचर अति घोर कठोरा । कहँ सुंदर सुत परम किसोरा ॥ ३ ॥
सुनि नृप गिरा प्रेम रस सानी । हृदयँ हरष माना मुनि ग्यानी ॥
तब बसिष्ट बहु बिधि समुझावा । नृप संदेह नास कहँ पावा ॥ ४ ॥
अति आदर दोउ तनय बोलाए । हृदयँ लाइ बहु भाँति सिखाए ॥
मेरे प्रान नाथ सुत दोऊ । तुम्ह मुनि पिता आन नहिं कोऊ ॥ ५ ॥

Hearing this most unwelcome demand the king's heart quivered and the brightness of his countenance faded. He said, "I have been blessed with these four sons in my old age. You have, therefore, made your demand without due consideration, holy sir. Ask of me land, cattle, goods and treasure, I will gladly give all I have without delay. Nothing is dearer than one's body and life; even these I would part with in a second. All my sons are dear to me as life, but in no case can I afford to spare Rāma, my lord. My lovely boys, who are yet too young, are no match for the most hideous and relentless demons." The enlightened hermit Viśwāmitra felt delighted at heart to hear the king's reply, steeped as it was in the nectar of love. Then Vasiṣṭha pleaded with the king in manifold ways and all his doubts were gone. Most politely he sent for the two boys and pressing them to his bosom admonished them in many ways. Turning to the sage he then said, "My lord, the two boys are my very life You are their only father now, holy sir; there is no one to look after them." (1—5)

दो०—सौंपे भूप रिषिहि सुत बहुबिधि देइ असीस ।
जननी भवन गए प्रभु चले नाइ पद सीस ॥ २०८ (क) ॥
सो०—पुरुषसिंह दोउ बीर हरषि चले मुनि भय हरन ।
कृपासिंधु मतिधीर अखिल बिस्व कारन करन ॥ २०८ (ख) ॥

Invoking various blessings on the boys the king committed them to the care of the sage, then they called at the mother's apartment and bowing their head at her feet departed. The two heroes, lions among men, oceans of compassion, resolute of purpose and the ultimate cause of the whole universe, gladly proceeded to rid the sage of his fear. (208 A-B)

चौ०—अरुन नयन उर बाहु बिसाला । नील जलज तनु स्याम तमाला ॥
कटि पट पीत कसें बर भाथा । रुचिर चाप सायक दुहुँ हाथा ॥ १ ॥

स्याम गौर सुंदर दोउ भाई। बिस्वामित्र महानिधि पाई॥
प्रभु ब्रह्मन्यदेव मैं जाना। मोहि निति पिता तजेउ भगवाना॥ २॥
चले जात मुनि दीन्हि देखाई। सुनि ताड़का क्रोध करि धाई॥
एकहिं बान प्रान हरि लीन्हा। दीन जानि तेहि निज पद दीन्हा॥ ३॥
तब रिषि निज नाथहि जियँ चीन्ही। बिद्यानिधि कहुँ बिद्या दीन्ही॥
जाते लाग न छुधा पिपासा। अतुलित बल तनु तेज प्रकासा॥ ४॥

The Lord had reddish eyes, a broad chest and long arms; His body was dark as the blue lotus or the Tamāla tree. With a beautiful quiver fastened at His back with a yellow piece of cloth wrapped round His waist, He held in His two hands a lovely bow and arrow respectively. In the two pretty boys, one of whom was dark and the other fair, Viśwāmitra secured a great treasure. "I have now realized," said he to himself, "that the Lord is a votary of the Brahmans; on my account He has left His own father." While on the way the sage pointed out the demoness Tāḍakā, who on hearing their voice rushed up in a fury. With a single shaft the Lord took her life and recognizing her as deserving of compassion bestowed His own state on her. Then the seer Viśwāmitra, while recognizing his lord as the fountain of knowledge, imparted to Him a sacred formula which armed Him against hunger and thirst and endowed Him with unequalled strength of body and a glow of vigour.

(1—4)

दो०—आयुध सर्ब समर्पि कै प्रभु निज आश्रम आनि।
कंद मूल फल भोजन दीन्ह भगति हित जानि॥ २०९॥

Making over to Him every kind of weapon the sage took the Lord to his own hermitage and devoutly gave Him bulbs, roots and fruits to eat, perceiving in Him his greatest friend.

(209)

चौ०—प्रात कहा मुनि सन रघुराई। निर्भय जग्य करहु तुम्ह जाई॥
होम करन लागे मुनि झारी। आपु रहे मख कीं रखवारी॥ १॥
सुनि मारीच निसाचर क्रोही। लै सहाय धावा मुनिद्रोही॥
बिनु फर बान राम तेहि मारा। सत जोजन गा सागर पारा॥ २॥
पावक सर सुबाहु पुनि मारा। अनुज निसाचर कटकु सँघारा॥
मारि असुर द्विज निर्भयकारी। अस्तुति करहिं देव मुनि झारी॥ ३॥
तहँ पुनि कछुक दिवस रघुराया। रहे कीन्हि बिप्रन्ह पर दाया॥
भगति हेतु बहु कथा पुराना। कहे बिप्र जद्यपि प्रभु जाना॥ ४॥
तब मुनि सादर कहा बुझाई। चरित एक प्रभु देखिअ जाई॥
धनुषजग्य सुनि रघुकुल नाथा। हरषि चले मुनिबर के साथा॥ ५॥
आश्रम एक दीख मग माहीं। खग मृग जीव जंतु तहँ नाहीं॥
पूछा मुनिहि सिला प्रभु देखी। सकल कथा मुनि कहा बिसेषी॥ ६॥

At daybreak the Lord of Raghus said to the sage, "You may now go and perform your sacrifice without any fear of molestation." All the sages then

started offering oblations into the sacred fire, while Śrī Rāma Himself guarded the sacrifice. On hearing of it the furious demon Mārīcha, a great enemy of hermits, rushed with his army. Śrī Rāma struck him with a headless shaft and he fell at a distance of eight hundred miles beyond the sea-shore. The Lord next despatched Subāhu with an arrow of fire; while His younger brother, Lakṣmana, exterminated the demon host. Having killed the demons in this way the Lord rid the Brahmans of their fear; the whole company of gods and sages offered praises to Him. The Lord of Raghus stayed there a few days more and showed His grace to the Brahmans. Even though the Lord knew everything, the Brahmans out of their devotion repeated to Him many legends from the Purāṇas. The sage then politely said to Him in a pleading tone, "My lord, let us go and witness a performance." Hearing of a bow-sacrifice, the Lord of Raghus gladly accompanied the noble sage. On the way they saw a hermitage without bird, beast or any other living creature. Observing a slab of stone lying there the Lord inquired of the sage about it, and the latter in reply told Him in detail the whole history behind it. (1—6)

दो०—गौतम नारि श्राप बस उपल देह धरि धीर ।
चरन कमल रज चाहति कृपा करहु रघुबीर ॥ २१० ॥

"Gautama's consort, having assumed the form of a stone under a curse, seeks with patience the dust of your lotus feet; show mercy to her, O Hero of Raghu's race." (210)

छं०—परसत पद पावन सोक नसावन प्रगट भई तपपुंज सही ।
देखत रघुनायक जन सुखदायक सनमुख होइ कर जोरि रही ॥
अति प्रेम अधीरा पुलक सरीरा मुख नहिं आवइ बचन कही ।
अतिसय बड़भागी चरनन्हि लागी जुगल नयन जलधार बही ॥ १ ॥
धीरजु मन कीन्हा प्रभु कहुँ चीन्हा रघुपति कृपाँ भगति पाई ।
अति निर्मल बानीं अस्तुति ठानी ग्यानगम्य जय रघुराई ॥
मैं नारि अपावन प्रभु जग पावन रावन रिपु जन सुखदाई ।
राजीव बिलोचन भव भय मोचन पाहि पाहि सरनहिं आई ॥ २ ॥
मुनि श्राप जो दीन्हा अति भल कीन्हा परम अनुग्रह मैं माना ।
देखेउँ भरि लोचन हरि भवमोचन इहइ लाभ संकर जाना ॥
बिनती प्रभु मोरी मैं मति भोरी नाथ न मागउँ बर आना ।
पद कमल परागा रस अनुरागा मम मन मधुप करै पाना ॥ ३ ॥
जेंहिं पद सुरसरिता परम पुनीता प्रगट भई सिव सीस धरी ।
सोई पद पंकज जेहि पूजत अज मम सिर धरेउ कृपाल हरी ॥
एहि भाँति सिधारी गौतम नारी बार बार हरि चरन परी ।
जो अति मन भावा सो बरु पावा गै पतिलोक अनंद भरी ॥ ४ ॥

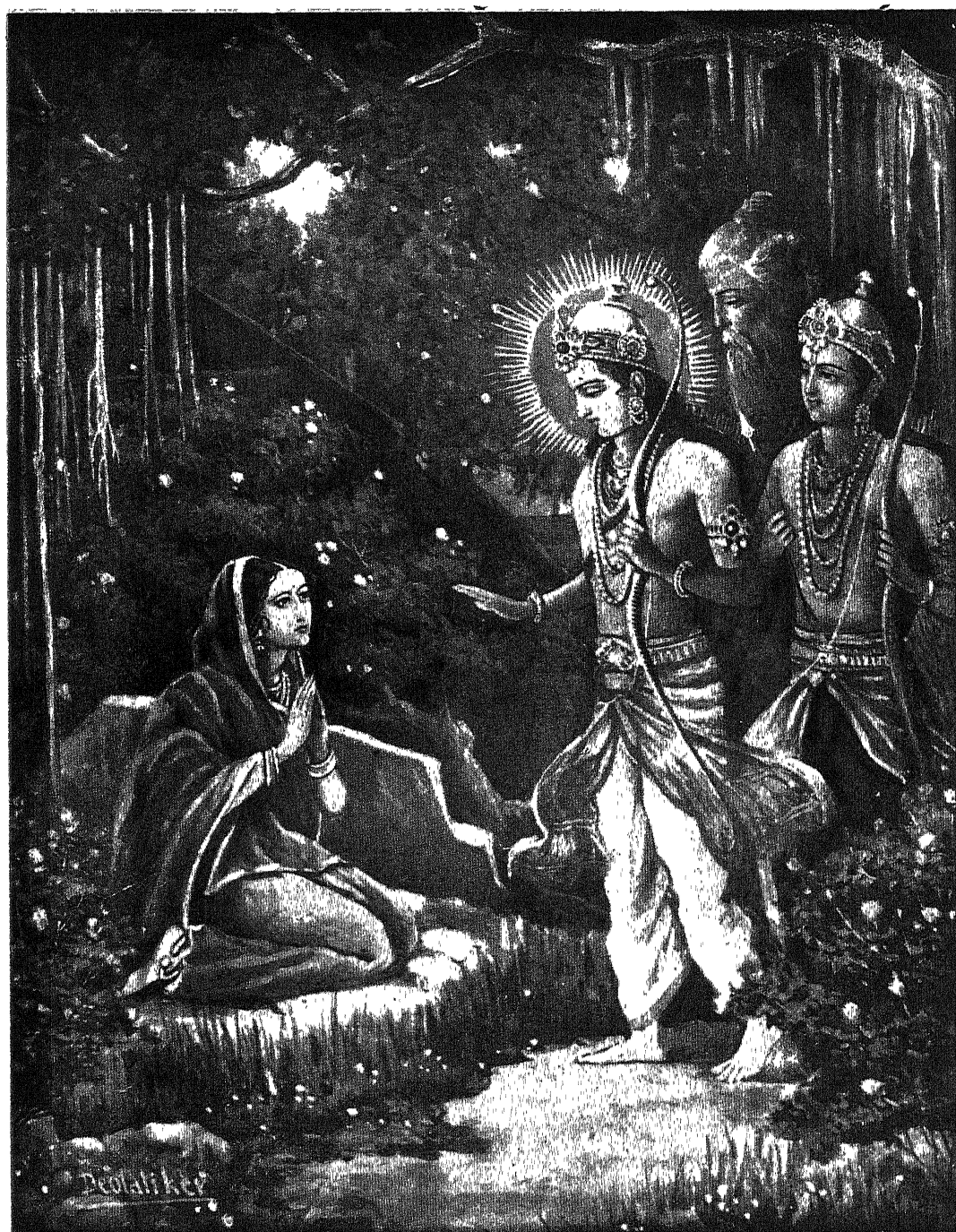
At the very touch of His holy feet, which drive away sorrow, emerged Ahalyā, a true embodiment of austerity. Beholding the Lord of Raghus, the delight of His servants, she stood before Him with joined palms. Her heart being overwhelmed with love, the hair on her body stood on their end and she was unable to utter a word. The most blessed Ahalyā cleaved to His feet and tears streamed from both her eyes Recovering herself she recognized the Lord and by the grace of Śrī Rāma attained devotion to His feet. In a guileless speech she began to praise the Lord, "Glory to the Lord of Raghus, who is accessible through spiritual knowledge I am an impure woman, while the Lord is able to sanctify the whole world and is the delight of His servants. O lotus-eyed enemy of Rāvaṇa, You rid Your devotees of the fear of rebirth, therefore I have taken refuge in You. Pray save me, save me. My consort (Gautama) did well in pronouncing a curse on me, and I have deemed it the greatest favour. I have feasted my eyes on Śrī Hari (Yourself), who liberates from the bondage of worldly existence. Lord Śankara deems Your sight as the only blessing worth the name. Lord, I am very innocent of heart; I have only one request to make I seek no other boon from You, my Master; I only crave that my mind may ever continue to enjoy the love of Your feet-dust even as a bee sucks the honey from a lotus. The merciful Lord Śrī Hari placed on my head the same lotus feet from which issued the most holy Gangā (the heavenly river)—which is borne by Śiva on His head,—and which are adored by Brahmā (the Creator)." Having thus praised Śrī Hari and falling again and again at His feet Gautama's consort (Ahalyā) took leave of the Lord; and securing a boon, which she held most dear to her heart, she went to her husband's abode full of joy. (1—4)

दो०—अस प्रभु दीनबंधु हरि कारन रहित दयाल ।
तुलसिदास सठ तेहि भजु छाड़ि कपट जंजाल ॥ २११ ॥

The Lord Śrī Hari is such a great friend of the humble and compassionate beyond one's deserts. Adore Him, O foolish Tulasīdāsa, giving up all deceit and wily wrangling. (211)

[PAUSE 7 FOR A THIRTY-DAY RECITATION]

चौ०—चले राम लछिमन मुनि संगा । गए जहाँ जग पावनि गंगा ॥
गाधिसूनु सब कथा सुनाई । जेहि प्रकार सुरसरि महि आई ॥ १ ॥
तब प्रभु रिषिन्ह समेत नहाए । बिबिध दान महिदेवन्हि पाए ॥
हरषि चले मुनि बृंद सहाया । बेगि बिदेह नगर निअराया ॥ २ ॥
पुर रम्यता राम जब देखी । हरषे अनुज समेत बिसेषी ॥
बापीं कूप सरित सर नाना । सलिल सुधासम मनि सोपाना ॥ ३ ॥
गुंजत मंजु मत्त रस भृंगा । कूजत कल बहुबरन बिहंगा ॥
बरन बरन बिकसे बनजाता । त्रिबिध समीर सदा सुखदाता ॥ ४ ॥

Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa accompanied the sage and reached the bank of the Gangā, the stream of which purifies the whole universe. The son of Gādhi, Viśwāmitra, related the whole legend how the celestial stream had come down upon earth. The Lord then performed His ablutions with all the sages, and

Liberation of Ahalyā

the Brahmans received gifts of various kinds. Accompanied by a troop of hermits the Lord gladly proceeded further and quickly drew near to the capital of the Videhas, Mithilā. When Śrī Rāma beheld the beauty of the city, He as well as His younger brother were much delighted. There were many big and small wells, rivers and tanks with water as sweet as nectar and reached by flights of steps made of jewels. Bees, drunk with honey, made a sweet humming sound and birds of various hues softly cooed Lotuses of different colours opened their petals; while a cool, soft and fragrant breeze ever delighted the soul. (1—4)

दो०—सुमन बाटिका बाग बन बिपुल बिहंग निवास।
फूलत फलत सुपल्लवत सोहत पुर चहुँ पास॥ २१२॥

The city was adorned on all sides with flower-gardens, orchards and groves, the haunt of innumerable birds, full of blossoms, fruits and charming leaves. (212)

चौ०—बनइ न बरनत नगर निकाई। जहाँ जाइ मन तहँइँ लोभाई॥
चारु बजारु बिचित्र अँबारी। मनिमय बिधि जनु स्वकर सँवारी॥ १॥
धनिक बनिक बर धनद समाना। बैठे सकल बस्तु लै नाना॥
चौहट सुंदर गलीं सुहाई। संतत रहहिं सुगंध सिंचाई॥ २॥
मंगलमय मंदिर सब केरें। चित्रित जनु रतिनाथ चितेरें॥
पुर नर नारि सुभग सुचि संता। धरमसील ग्यानी गुनवंता॥ ३॥
अति अनूप जहँ जनक निवासू। बिथकहिं बिबुध बिलोकि बिलासू॥
होत चकित चित कोट बिलोकी। सकल भुवन सोभा जनु रोकी॥ ४॥

The beauty of the city surpassed description; every inch of it was soul-captivating. There was a lovely bazar and gorgeous balconies made of jewels, fashioned as it were by the Creator with his own hands. Wealthy and good merchants, who vied with Kubera (the god of wealth), sat with all their various goods. Beautiful crossings of roads and charming streets were constantly sprinkled with scented waters. The houses of all were abodes of bliss and contained beautiful wall-paintings portrayed, as it were, by Rati's lord (Cupid) himself. The people of the city, both men and women, were good-looking, pious, saintly, virtuous, wise and accomplished. The palace of King Janaka was most marvellous, the sight of whose splendour astounded even gods. Even the fortification wall filled the mind with wonder, it seemed as if it had enclosed within its limits the beauty of the whole universe. (1—4)

दो०—धवल धाम मनि पुरट पट सुघटित नाना भाँति।
सिय निवास सुंदर सदन सोभा किमि कहि जाति॥ २१३॥

White palaces were screened here and there by bejewelled gold tapestries of various beautiful designs; while the exquisite palace where Sītā lived was far too lovely for words to describe. (213)

चौ०—सुभग द्वार सब कुलिस कपाटा। भूप भीर नट मागध भाटा॥
बनी बिसाल बाजि गज साला। हय गय रथ संकुल सब काला॥ १॥

सूर सचिव सेनप बहुतेरे । नृपगृह सरिस सदन सब केरे ॥
पुर बाहेर सर सरित समीपा । उतरे जहँ तहँ बिपुल महीपा ॥ २ ॥
देखि अनूप एक अँवराई । सब सुपास सब भाँति सुहाई ॥
कौसिक कहेउ मोर मनु माना । इहाँ रहिअ रघुबीर सुजाना ॥ ३ ॥
भलेहिं नाथ कहि कृपानिकेता । उतरे तहँ मुनिबृंद समेता ॥
बिस्वामित्र महामुनि आए । समाचार मिथिलापति पाए ॥ ४ ॥

The entrances to the palace were all beautiful and protected with doors of diamond. They were always thronged with feudatory princes, dancers, panegyrists and bards. There were spacious stables and stalls for elephants, which were crowded at all times with steeds, elephants and chariots. The king had a number of brave ministers and generals. They all owned mansions that vied with the royal palace. In the outskirts of the city by the side of lakes and rivers numerous princes had encamped here and there. On seeing a fine mango-grove, which was comfortable and agreeable in every way, the sage Kauśika (Viśwāmitra) said, "O wise hero of Raghu's race, I like this orchard; let us stay here." "Very well, my lord!" answered the gracious Lord, and encamped there with all the hermits' train. When the king of Mithilā got the news that the great sage Viśwāmitra had come, (1—4)

दो०—संग सचिव सुचि भूरि भट भूसुर बर गुर ग्याति ।
चले मिलन मुनिनायकहि मुदित राउ एहि भाँति ॥ २१४ ॥

He took with him his faithful ministers, a number of warriors, noble Brahmans, his family preceptor (Śatānanda) and the chief of his kinsmen, and thus went forth rejoicing to meet the prince of sages. (214)

चौ०—कीन्ह प्रनामु चरन धरि माथा । दीन्हि असीस मुदित मुनिनाथा ॥
बिप्रबृंद सब सादर बंदे । जानि भाग्य बड़ राउ अनंदे ॥ १ ॥
कुसल प्रस्न कहि बारहिं बारा । बिस्वामित्र नृपहि बैठारा ॥
तेहि अवसर आए दोउ भाई । गए रहे देखन फुलवाई ॥ २ ॥
स्याम गौर मृदु बयस किसोरा । लोचन सुखद बिस्व चित चोरा ॥
उठे सकल जब रघुपति आए । बिस्वामित्र निकट बैठाए ॥ ३ ॥
भए सब सुखी देखि दोउ भ्राता । बारि बिलोचन पुलकित गाता ॥
मूरति मधुर मनोहर देखी । भयउ बिदेहु बिदेहु बिसेषी ॥ ४ ॥

Placing his head on the sage's feet the king made obeisance to him; while the lord of the sages, Viśwāmitra, gladly gave him his blessing. The king then respectfully saluted the Brahmans and congratulated himself on his good fortune (in being able to receive them). Inquiring again and again about his welfare, Viśwāmitra led the king to a seat. At that very time arrived the two half-brothers, who had gone to see the garden. One dark and the other fair, the two lads were yet tender of age. The delight of all eyes, they stole the heart of the whole world. All those present there rose when the Lord of

Raghus came; and Viśwāmitra seated Him by his side. They were all delighted to see the two brothers; tears rushed to their eyes and the hair on their body bristled with joy. Beholding Śrī Rāma's lovely and charming form, King Videha* (Janaka) was particularly beside himself with joy. (1—4)

दो०—प्रेम मगन मनु जानि नृपु करि बिबेकु धरि धीर ।
बोलेउ मुनि पद नाइ सिरु गदगद गिरा गभीर ॥ २१५ ॥

Finding his heart overwhelmed with love the king recovered himself by recourse to reason and, bowing his head at the sage's feet, spoke the following pregnant words in a voice choked with emotion.— (215)

चौ०—कहहु नाथ सुंदर दोउ बालक । मुनिकुल तिलक कि नृपकुलपालक ॥
ब्रह्म जो निगम नेति कहि गावा । उभय बेष धरि की सोइ आवा ॥ १ ॥
सहज बिरागरूप मनु मोरा । थकित होत जिमि चंद चकोरा ॥
ताते प्रभु पूछउँ सतिभाऊ । कहहु नाथ जनि करहु दुराऊ ॥ २ ॥
इन्हहि बिलोकत अति अनुरागा । बरबस ब्रह्मसुखहि मन त्यागा ॥
कह मुनि बिहसि कहेहु नृप नीका । बचन तुम्हार न होइ अलीका ॥ ३ ॥
ये प्रिय सबहि जहाँ लगि प्रानी । मन मुसुकाहिं रामु सुनि बानी ॥
रघुकुल मनि दसरथ के जाए । मम हित लागि नरेस पठाए ॥ ४ ॥

"Tell me, my lord: are these two pretty boys the ornament of a sage's family or the bulwarks of some royal dynasty? Or, is it that Brahma (the Absolute), whom the Vedas describe in negative terms such as 'Not that' (*Neti*), has appeared in a dual form? My mind, which is dispassion itself in its natural form, is enraptured at their sight even as the Chakora bird is transported with joy at the sight of the moon. Therefore, Sir, I earnestly inquire of you: tell me the truth, my Lord; hide nothing from me. Deeply attached to them at their very sight, my mind has perforce renounced the joy of absorption into Brahma." The sage smilingly answered, "You have spoken well, O king; your words can never be untrue. Whatever living beings there are in this world, they all love these boys" Śrī Rāma smiled within Himself on hearing these words. "They are the sons of King Daśaratha, the jewel of Raghu's race; the king has sent them for my cause. (1—4)

दो०—रामु लखनु दोउ बंधुबर रूप सील बल धाम ।
मख राखेउ सबु साखि जगु जिते असुर संग्राम ॥ २१६ ॥

These two noble brothers, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, are the embodiments of beauty, virtue and strength. The whole world knows that they conquered the demons in battle and protected my sacrifice from harm." (216)

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* There is a pun on the word 'Videha' in the original. The kings of Mithilā enjoyed the hereditary title of 'Videha' because they ruled over the territory of Videha (Mithilā). King Janaka was also a man of wisdom and had, therefore, no feeling of self-identification with the body. At the sight of Śrī Rāma, however, he was completely out of his body and therefore justified his name (Videha) in a special degree.

चौ०—मुनि तव चरन देखि कह राऊ। कहि न सकउँ निज पुन्य प्रभाऊ॥
सुंदर स्याम गौर दोउ भ्राता। आनँदहू के आनँद दाता॥ १॥
इन्ह कै प्रीति परसपर पावनि। कहि न जाइ मन भाव सुहावनि॥
सुनहु नाथ कह मुदित बिदेहू। ब्रह्म जीव इव सहज सनेहू॥ २॥
पुनि पुनि प्रभुहि चितव नरनाहू। पुलक गात उर अधिक उछाहू॥
मुनिहि प्रसंसि नाइ पद सीसू। चलेउ लवाइ नगर अवनीसू॥ ३॥
सुंदर सदनु सुखद सब काला। तहाँ बासु लै दीन्ह भुआला॥
करि पूजा सब बिधि सेवकाई। गयउ राउ गृह बिदा कराई॥ ४॥

"When I behold your feet, O sage," added the king, "I cannot tell what a great merit I have earned in the past. These two brothers, one of whom is dark of hue and the other fair, are the delight of delight itself. Their guileless affection for each other is beyond description; it is so agreeable and soul-ravishing." "Listen to me, my lord," continued King Videha rejoicing, "they have natural affinity for each other like the one existing between Brahma (the Supreme Spirit) and Jīva (the individual soul)." The king gazed upon the Lord over and over again; the hair on his body stood on end and his heart overflowed with joy. Extolling the sage and bowing his head at the latter's feet, the king escorted him to his capital, and lodged the sage in a beautiful palace which was comfortable at all times. Then, after further homage and rendering all kinds of service to him, the king took leave of the sage and returned to his own palace

(1—4)

दो०—रिषय संग रघुबंस मनि करि भोजनु बिश्रामु।
बैठे प्रभु भ्राता सहित दिवसु रहा भरि जामु॥ २१७॥

Having dined with the seers and rested awhile, Lord Śrī Rāma, the Jewel of Raghu's race, sat down by His brother's side; a quarter of the day still remained.

(217)

चौ०—लखन हृदयँ लालसा बिसेषी। जाइ जनकपुर आइअ देखी॥
प्रभु भय बहुरि मुनिहि सकुचाहीं। प्रगट न कहहिं मनहिं मुसुकाहीं॥ १॥
राम अनुज मन की गति जानी। भगत बछलता हियँ हुलसानी॥
परम बिनीत सकुचि मुसुकाई। बोले गुर अनुसासन पाई॥ २॥
नाथ लखनु पुरु देखन चहहीं। प्रभु सकोच डर प्रगट न कहहीं॥
जौं राउर आयसु मैं पावौं। नगर देखाइ तुरत लै आवौं॥ ३॥
सुनि मुनीसु कह बचन सप्रीती। कस न राम तुम्ह राखहु नीती॥
धरम सेतु पालक तुम्ह ताता। प्रेम बिबस सेवक सुखदाता॥ ४॥

Lakṣmaṇa felt in his heart a great longing to go and see Janaka's capital. He was, however, afraid of the Lord and stood in awe of the sage; therefore he did not openly declare it and smiled within himself. Śrī Rāma understood what was passing in His younger brother's mind; and His heart overflowed with a kindly feeling for His devotee. Taking leave of His preceptor

to speak, He smilingly spoke with much diffidence in most polite terms, "My lord, Lakṣmaṇa longs to see the city, but out of fear and respect for you he does not make it known to you. If I have your permission, I will take him round the city and quickly bring him back." Hearing this the chief of sages, Viśwāmitra, replied in affectionate terms, "It is no wonder, Rāma, that You should respect good manners. You are the upholder of the moral code, my son, and bring joy to Your servants out of love for them. (1—4)

दो०—जाइ देखि आवहु नगरु सुख निधान दोउ भाइ ।
करहु सुफल सब के नयन सुंदर बदन देखाइ ॥ २१८ ॥

"Go, blissful pair of brothers, and having seen the city come back. Bless the eyes of all by showing them your charming countenance." (218)

चौ०—मुनि पद कमल बंदि दोउ भ्राता । चले लोक लोचन सुख दाता ॥
बालक बृंद देखि अति सोभा । लगे संग लोचन मनु लोभा ॥ १ ॥
पीत बसन परिकर कटि भाथा । चारु चाप सर सोहत हाथा ॥
तन अनुहरत सुचंदन खोरी । स्यामल गौर मनोहर जोरी ॥ २ ॥
केहरि कंधर बाहु बिसाला । उर अति रुचिर नागमनि माला ॥
सुभग सोन सरसीरुह लोचन । बदन मयंक तापत्रय मोचन ॥ ३ ॥
कानन्हि कनक फूल छबि देहीं । चितवत चितहि चोरि जनु लेहीं ॥
चितवनि चारु भृकुटि बर बाँकी । तिलक रेख सोभा जनु चाँकी ॥ ४ ॥

Saluting the lotus-feet of the sage the two brothers, the delight of the eyes of the whole world, departed. Beholding the exquisite beauty of the two brothers troops of boys followed them, their eyes and mind being enamoured of it. Clad in yellow garments they had a quiver fastened at their back, with a cloth (of the same colour) wrapped round their waist; their hands were adorned with a graceful bow and arrow respectively. The beautiful pair, one of whom was dark and the other fair, had streaks of (red or white) sandalwood paste painted on their body so as to match the complexion. With a neck as well-built as the lion's and long arms they had on their bosom an exquisite string of pearls obtained from the forehead of elephants. Their lovely eyes resembled the red lotus; and the moon-like face relieved one of the threefold agony Their ears were adorned with pendants of gold, which stole as it were the heart of those who looked on them. They cast a bewitching glance and had a pair of arched and shapely eyebrows; the lines of the sectarian mark on the forehead looked as if beauty had been sealed there. (1—4)

दो०—रुचिर चौतनीं सुभग सिर मेचक कुंचित केस ।
नख सिख सुंदर बंधु दोउ सोभा सकल सुदेस ॥ २१९ ॥

Their beautiful head was covered with a charming rectangular cap and dark curly locks. The two brothers were lovely from head to foot, the beauty of every limb was as it should be. (219)

चौ०—देखन नगरु भूपसुत आए । समाचार पुरबासिन्ह पाए ॥
धाए धाम काम सब त्यागी । मनहुँ रंक निधि लूटन लागी ॥ १ ॥
निरखि सहज सुंदर दोउ भाई । होहिं सुखी लोचन फल पाई ॥
जुबतीं भवन झरोखन्हि लागी । निरखहिं राम रूप अनुरागीं ॥ २ ॥
कहहिं परसपर बचन सप्रीती । सखि इन्ह कोटि काम छबि जीती ॥
सुर नर असुर नाग मुनि माहीं । सोभा असि कहुँ सुनिअति नाहीं ॥ ३ ॥
बिष्नु चारि भुज बिधि मुख चारी । बिकट बेष मुख पंच पुरारी ॥
अपर देउ अस कोउ न आही । यह छबि सखी पटतरिअ जाही ॥ ४ ॥

When the citizens received the news that the two princes had come to see the town, they all left their business and ran out of their homes as if paupers were out to grab a valuable property. Beholding the natural grace of two brothers, they were glad at heart and attained the consummation of their eyes. Sticking to the air-holes of their houses young ladies lovingly scanned Śrī Rāma's beauty. They fondly spoke to one another in the following words. "O friend, He has surpassed in beauty millions of Cupids. Nowhere among gods, men, demons, Nāgas or sages do we hear of such beauty. God Viṣṇu is endowed with four arms, Brahmā has four faces, while Śiva, the Slayer of Tripura, has a frightful garb and five faces. O friend, there is no other god who could stand comparison with this beauty. (1—4)

दो०—बय किसोर सुषमा सदन स्याम गौर सुखधाम ।
अंग अंग पर वारिअहिं कोटि कोटि सत काम ॥ २२० ॥

"The two lads, one dark and the other fair, are yet of tender age and are repositories of beauty and abodes of bliss. Millions and hundreds of millions of Cupids are worth sacrificing to each one of their limbs." (220)

चौ०—कहहु सखी अस को तनुधारी । जो न मोह यह रूप निहारी ॥
कोउ सप्रेम बोली मृदु बानी । जो मैं सुना सो सुनहु सयानी ॥ १ ॥
ए दोऊ दसरथ के ढोटा । बाल मरालन्हि के कल जोटा ॥
मुनि कौसिक मख के रखवारे । जिन्ह रन अजिर निसाचर मारे ॥ २ ॥
स्याम गात कल कंज बिलोचन । जो मारीच सुभुज मदु मोचन ॥
कौसल्या सुत सो सुख खानी । नामु रामु धनु सायक पानी ॥ ३ ॥
गौर किसोर बेषु बर काछें । कर सर चाप राम के पाछें ॥
लछिमनु नामु राम लघु भ्राता । सुनु सखि तासु सुमित्रा माता ॥ ४ ॥

"Tell me, friend, what embodied being is there that would not be charmed to see such beauty?" One of them lovingly said in gentle tones, "Hear, my dear, what I have been told. These two lads, a beautiful pair of cygnets as it were, are sons of King Daśaratha, they are the protectors of Kauśika's sacrifice, and have slain demons in the field of battle. He who has a swarthy form and has charming lotus-like eyes and who has quelled the pride of Mārīcha and Subāhu, wielding a bow and shaft in His hands,

is Kausalyā's son, Rāma by name, the very fountain of bliss. The fair youth in gallant attire, who is closely following Śrī Rāma, a bow and arrow in hand, is the latter's younger brother and is named Lakṣmaṇa. Sumitrā, friend, is his mother, you must know. (1—4)

दो०—बिप्रकाजु करि बंधु दोउ मग मुनिबधू उधारि।
आए देखन चापमख सुनि हरषीं सब नारि॥ २२१॥

"Having accomplished the object of the Brahman, Viśwāmitra, and redeeming the sage's wife, Ahalyā, on the way, the two brothers have come here to witness the bow-sacrifice." All the ladies were delighted to hear this. (221)

चौ०—देखि राम छबि कोउ एक कहई। जोगु जानकिहि यह बरु अहई॥
जौं सखि इन्हहि देख नरनाहू। पन परिहरि हठि करइ बिबाहू॥ १॥
कोउ कह ए भूपति पहिचाने। मुनि समेत सादर सनमाने॥
सखि परंतु पनु राउ न तजई। बिधि बस हठि अबिबेकहि भजई॥ २॥
कोउ कह जौं भल अहइ बिधाता। सब कहँ सुनिअ उचित फलदाता॥
तौ जानकिहि मिलिहि बरु एहू। नाहिन आलि इहाँ संदेहू॥ ३॥
जौं बिधि बस अस बनै सँजोगू। तौ कृतकृत्य होइ सब लोगू॥
सखि हमरें आरति अति तातें। कबहुँक ए आवहिं एहि नातें॥ ४॥

Beholding Śrī Rāma's beauty someone said, "Here is a bridegroom worthy of Princess Jānakī. If the king does but see him, friend, I am sure he will abandon his vow and insist upon their marriage." Said another, "The king has come to know them and has received them as well as the sage with all honour. But the king, my dear, refuses to give up his vow and, as Fate would have it, persists in his folly." Yet another said, "If Providence is good and, as we are told, gives every man his due, then Jānakī is sure to have him as her bridegroom. About this, my dear, there can be no doubt. If such a union is brought about by Providence, everyone will have realized one's object. My impatience, friend, is augmented by the thought that this alliance will impel him to visit this place again. (1—4)

दो०—नाहिं त हम कहुँ सुनहु सखि इन्ह कर दरसनु दूरि।
यह संघटु तब होइ जब पुन्य पुराकृत भूरि॥ २२२॥

"Otherwise, my dear, it is out of question for us, I tell you, to see Him again. Such an event can take place only when we have a rich stock of merit accumulated in previous existences." (222)

चौ०—बोली अपर कहेहु सखि नीका। एहिं बिआह अति हित सबही का॥
कोउ कह संकर चाप कठोरा। ए स्यामल मृदुगात किसोरा॥ १॥
सबु असमंजस अहइ सयानी। यह सुनि अपर कहइ मृदु बानी॥
सखि इन्ह कहँ कोउ कोउ अस कहहीं। बड़ प्रभाउ देखत लघु अहहीं॥ २॥

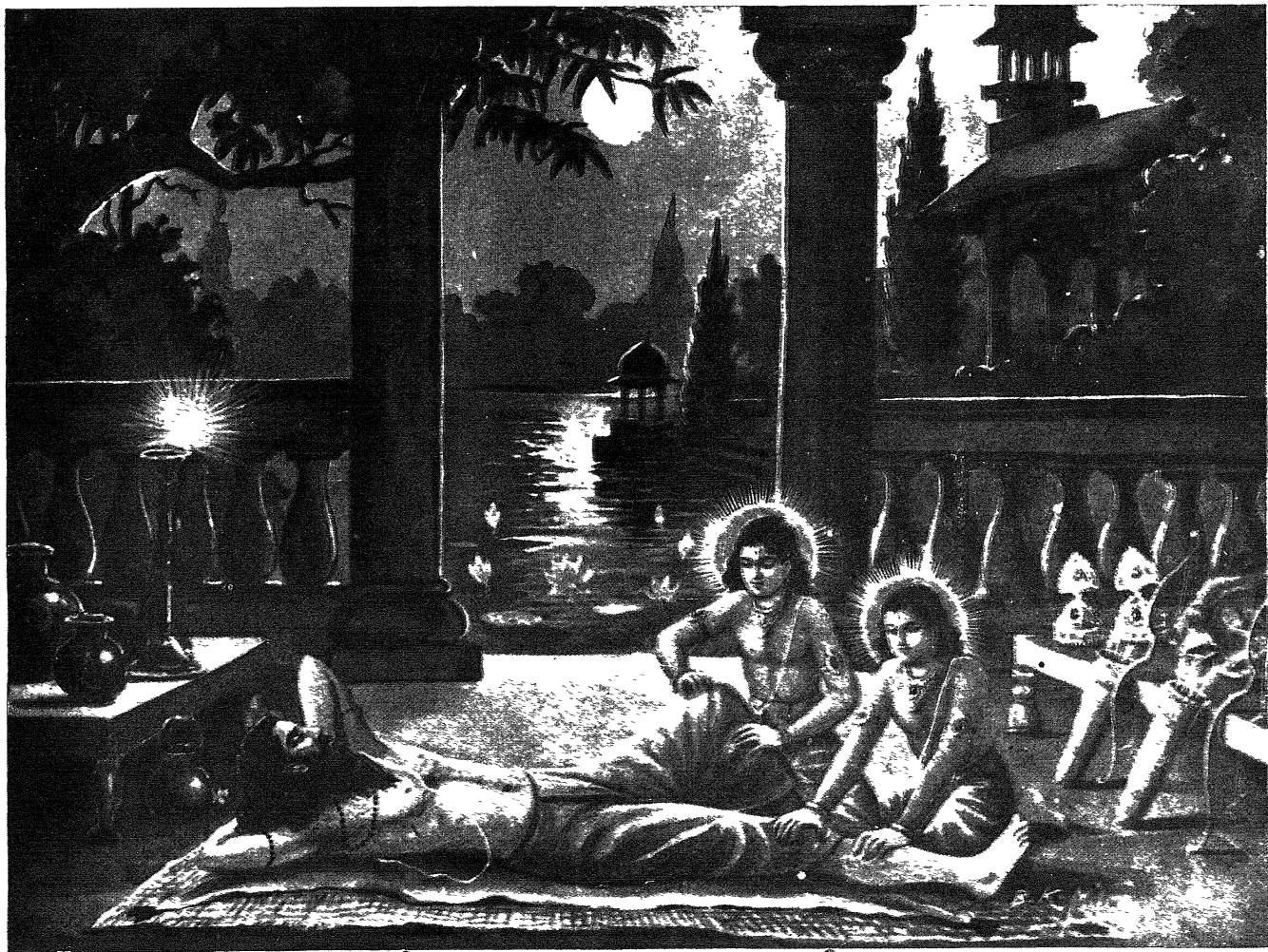
परसि जासु पद पंकज धूरी । तरी अहल्या कृत अघ भूरी ॥
सो कि रहिहि बिनु सिवधनु तोरें । यह प्रतीति परिहरिअ न भोरें ॥ ३ ॥
जेहिं बिरंचि रचि सीय सँवारी । तेहिं स्यामल बरु रचेउ बिचारी ॥
तासु बचन सुनि सब हरषानीं । ऐसेइ होउ कहहिं मृदु बानीं ॥ ४ ॥

Someone else said, "Friend, you have spoken well. This union will be conducive to the best interests of all." Still another said, "Śankara's bow is hard to bend, while this swarthy lad is of delicate frame. Everything, my dear, is out of place" Hearing this, another said in a soft voice, "Friend, with regard to this lad I have heard some people say that, though small in appearance, He wields a great power. Touched by the dust of His lotus-feet Ahalyā, who had perpetrated a great sin, attained salvation. He will, therefore, surely break Śiva's bow; one should never commit the mistake of giving up this faith The same Creator, who fashioned Sītā with great skill, has preordained for her this dark-complexioned bridegroom." Everyone was pleased to hear the words of this lady and softly exclaimed "Amen!" (1—4)

दो०—हियँ हरषहिं बरषहिं सुमन सुमुखि सुलोचनि बृंद ।
जाहिं जहाँ जहँ बंधु दोउ तहँ तहँ परमानंद ॥ २२३ ॥

In their gladness of heart troops of fair-faced, bright-eyed dames rained flowers on the princes. Wherever the two brothers went, there was supreme joy. (223)

चौ०—पुर पूरब दिसि गे दोउ भाई । जहँ धनुमख हित भूमि बनाई ॥
अति बिस्तार चारु गच ढारी । बिमल बेदिका रुचिर सँवारी ॥ १ ॥
चहुँ दिसि कंचन मंच बिसाला । रचे जहाँ बैठहिं महिपाला ॥
तेहि पाछें समीप चहुँ पासा । अपर मंच मंडली बिलासा ॥ २ ॥
कछुक ऊँचि सब भाँति सुहाई । बैठहिं नगर लोग जहँ जाई ॥
तिन्ह के निकट बिसाल सुहाए । धवल धाम बहुबरन बनाए ॥ ३ ॥
जहँ बैठें देखहिं सब नारी । जथाजोगु निज कुल अनुहारी ॥
पुर बालक कहि कहि मृदु बचना । सादर प्रभुहि देखावहिं रचना ॥ ४ ॥

The two brothers reached the eastern quarter of the city, where the arena for the bow-sacrifice had been got ready. In the midst of a beautiful and spacious paved area a spotless altar was richly adorned. On all the four sides of this altar were erected elevated and broad seats of gold to be occupied by the princes. Not far behind and surrounding them on all sides shone another circular tier of raised seats, which was of somewhat greater height and beautiful in every way, and where the people of the city might come and take their seat. Close to these were constructed spacious and beautiful gallaries of glistening white, painted in diverse colours, whence ladies might view the spectacle seated in their appropriate places according to their family rank. The children of the town politely showed the Lord all the preparations speaking to Him in gentle words. (1—4)

Devotion to the Guru

दो०—सब सिसु एहि मिस प्रेमबस परसि मनोहर गात ।
तन पुलकहिं अति हरषु हियँ देखि देखि दोउ भ्रात ॥ २२४ ॥

Thus finding an occasion for touching their charming limbs all the children were overwhelmed with love, experienced a thrill all over their body and their heart overflowed with joy on seeing the two brothers again and again. (224)

चौ०—सिसु सब राम प्रेमबस जाने । प्रीति समेत निकेत बखाने ॥
निज निज रुचि सब लेहिं बोलाई । सहित सनेह जाहिं दोउ भाई ॥ १ ॥
राम देखावहिं अनुजहि रचना । कहि मृदु मधुर मनोहर बचना ॥
लव निमेष महुँ भुवन निकाया । रचइ जासु अनुसासन माया ॥ २ ॥
भगति हेतु सोइ दीनदयाला । चितवत चकित धनुष मखसाला ॥
कौतुक देखि चले गुरु पाहीं । जानि बिलंबु त्रास मन माहीं ॥ ३ ॥
जासु त्रास डर कहुँ डर होई । भजन प्रभाउ देखावत सोई ॥
कहि बातें मृदु मधुर सुहाईं । किए बिदा बालक बरिआईं ॥ ४ ॥

Finding all the children under the spell of affection, Śrī Rāma lovingly extolled the places shown by them. All of them would call the two brothers wherever they pleased and the two brothers went to them out of loving kindness. Śrī Rāma showed to His younger brother the arrangements that had been made there, speaking to him in soft, sweet and agreeable words. He in obedience to whose fiat Māyā brings forth multitudes of universes in the quarter of a second, the same gracious Lord, conquered by devotion, looks with amazement on the arena for the bow-sacrifice. Having seen the whole show the two brothers returned to their Guru; but the thought of their being late disturbed their mind. The Lord, whose sublimity inspires terror into Terror itself thus manifests the glory of devotion. With many kind and courteous phrases they took leave of the youngsters much against the latters' will. (1—4)

दो०—सभय सप्रेम बिनीत अति सकुच सहित दोउ भाइ ।
गुर पद पंकज नाइ सिर बैठे आयसु पाइ ॥ २२५ ॥

Meekly and most submissively, with a mingled feeling of awe and love, the two brothers bowed their head at the lotus feet of the preceptor (Viśwāmitra) and sat down with his permission. (225)

चौ०—निसि प्रबेस मुनि आयसु दीन्हा । सबहीं संध्याबंदनु कीन्हा ॥
कहत कथा इतिहास पुरानी । रुचिर रजनि जुग जाम सिरानी ॥ १ ॥
मुनिबर सयन कीन्हि तब जाई । लगे चरन चापन दोउ भाई ॥
जिन्ह के चरन सरोरुह लागी । करत बिबिध जप जोग बिरागी ॥ २ ॥
तेइ दोउ बंधु प्रेम जनु जीते । गुर पद कमल पलोटत प्रीते ॥
बार बार मुनि अग्या दीन्ही । रघुबर जाइ सयन तब कीन्ही ॥ ३ ॥
चापत चरन लखनु उर लाएँ । सभय सप्रेम परम सचु पाएँ ॥
पुनि पुनि प्रभु कह सोवहु ताता । पौढे धरि उर पद जलजाता ॥ ४ ॥

At the approach of night the sage (Viśwāmitra) gave the word and all performed their evening devotions, and, while the sage recited old legends and narratives, two watches of the beautiful night passed. The chief of the sages, Viśwāmitra, then retired to his bed; and the two brothers began to rub his feet. The couple whose lotus-feet are sought by men of dispassion muttering various sacred formulae and practising different kinds of Yoga (means of union with God) lovingly rubbed the lotus-like feet of their Guru, conquered as it were by his love. When the sage asked Him again and again, the Chief of Raghu's race went to bed only then. Lakṣmaṇa pressed the Lord's feet to his bosom and caressed them with reverence and love deriving supreme joy from this service. It was only when the Lord repeatedly said, "Retire now, my brother," that he laid himself down cherishing his Brother's lotus-feet in his heart.

(1—4)

दो०—उठे लखनु निसि बिगत सुनि अरुनसिखा धुनि कान ।
गुर तें पहिलेहिं जगतपति जागे रामु सुजान ॥ २२६ ॥

Towards the close of night, at the sound of cock-crow, got up Lakṣmaṇa. The Lord of the universe, the all-wise Śrī Rāma, also woke before His preceptor.

(226)

चौ०—सकल सौच करि जाइ नहाए । नित्य निबाहि मुनिहि सिर नाए ॥
समय जानि गुर आयसु पाई । लेन प्रसून चले दोउ भाई ॥ १ ॥
भूप बागु बर देखेउ जाई । जहँ बसंत रितु रही लोभाई ॥
लागे बिटप मनोहर नाना । बरन बरन बर बेलि बिताना ॥ २ ॥
नव पल्लव फल सुमन सुहाए । निज संपति सुर रूख लजाए ॥
चातक कोकिल कीर चकोरा । कूजत बिहग नटत कल मोरा ॥ ३ ॥
मध्य बाग सरु सोह सुहावा । मनि सोपान बिचित्र बनावा ॥
बिमल सलिलु सरसिज बहुरंगा । जलखग कूजत गुंजत भृंगा ॥ ४ ॥

Having performed all the customary acts of purification, they went and finished their ablutions; and having gone through their daily routine of devotions etc. they bowed before the sage. When the time came, the two brothers took leave of the preceptor and went out to gather flowers. Having gone out they saw the lovely royal garden, enamoured of whose beauty the vernal season had taken its permanent abode there. It was planted with charming trees of various kinds and overhung with beautiful creepers of different colours. Rich in fresh leaf, fruit and flower they put to shame even celestial trees by their wealth. The feathered choir of the Chātakas, cuckoos, parrots and Chakoras warbled and peacocks beautifully danced. In the centre of the garden a lovely lake shone bright with flights of steps made of many-coloured gems. Its limpid water contained lotuses of various colours and was vocal with the cooing of aquatic birds and the humming of bees.

(1—4)

दो०—बागु तड़ागु बिलोकि प्रभु हरषे बंधु समेत ।
परम रम्य आरामु यहु जो रामहि सुख देत ॥ २२७ ॥

Both the Lord and His brother were delighted to behold the garden with its lake. Most lovely must have been that garden which delighted even Śrī Rāma (*lit.*, the delighter of all)! (227)

चौ०—चहुँ दिसि चितइ पूँछि मालीगन । लगे लेन दल फूल मुदित मन ॥
तेहि अवसर सीता तहँ आई । गिरिजा पूजन जननि पठाई ॥ १ ॥
संग सखीं सब सुभग सयानीं । गावहिं गीत मनोहर बानीं ॥
सर समीप गिरिजा गृह सोहा । बरनि न जाइ देखि मनु मोहा ॥ २ ॥
मज्जनु करि सर सखिन्ह समेता । गई मुदित मन गौरि निकेता ॥
पूजा कीन्हि अधिक अनुरागा । निज अनुरूप सुभग बरु मागा ॥ ३ ॥
एक सखी सिय संगु बिहाई । गई रही देखन फुलवाई ॥
तेहिं दोउ बंधु बिलोके जाई । प्रेम बिबस सीता पहिं आई ॥ ४ ॥

After looking all about, and with the consent of the gardeners, the two brothers began in high glee to gather leaves and flowers. On that very occasion Sītā too arrived there, having been sent by Her mother to worship Girijā. She was accompanied by Her girl-companions, who were all lovely and intelligent. They sang melodies in an enchanting voice. Close to the lake stood a temple, sacred to Girijā, which was beautiful beyond description, and captivated the mind of those who looked at it. Having taken a dip into the lake with Her companions, Sītā went with a glad heart to Girijā's temple. She offered worship with great devotion and begged of the Goddess a handsome match worthy of Her. One of Her companions had strayed away from Her in order to have a look at the garden. She chanced to behold the two brothers and returned to Sītā overwhelmed with love. (1—4)

दो०—तासु दसा देखी सखिन्ह पुलक गात जलु नैन ।
कहु कारनु निज हरष कर पूछहिं सब मृदु बैन ॥ २२८ ॥

When her companions saw her condition, her body thrilling all over and her eyes full of tears, they all asked her in gentle tones, "Tell us what gladdens your heart." (228)

चौ०—देखन बागु कुअँर दुइ आए । बय किसोर सब भाँति सुहाए ॥
स्याम गौर किमि कहौं बखानी । गिरा अनयन नयन बिनु बानी ॥ १ ॥
सुनि हरषीं सब सखीं सयानी । सिय हियँ अति उतकंठा जानी ॥
एक कहइ नृपसुत तेइ आली । सुने जे मुनि सँग आए काली ॥ २ ॥
जिन्ह निज रूप मोहनी डारी । कीन्हे स्वबस नगर नर नारी ॥
बरनत छबि जहँ तहँ सब लोगू । अवसि देखिअहिं देखन जोगू ॥ ३ ॥
तासु बचन अति सियहि सोहाने । दरस लागि लोचन अकुलाने ॥
चली अग्र करि प्रिय सखि सोई । प्रीति पुरातन लखइ न कोई ॥ ४ ॥

"Two princes have come to see the garden, both of tender age and charming in every way, one dark of hue and the other fair; how shall I describe them ? For speech is sightless, while the eyes are mute." All the clever maidens

were delighted to hear this Perceiving the intense longing in Sītā's bosom one of them said, "They must be the two princes, my dear, who, I was told, arrived yesterday with the sage (Viśwāmitra), and who have captivated the heart of men and women of the city by casting the spell of their beauty. All are talking of their loveliness here, there and everywhere. We must see them, for they are worth seeing." The words of this damsel highly pleased Sītā; Her eyes were restless for the sight of the princes. With that kind friend to lead the way She followed; no one knew that Hers was an old love

(1—4)

दो०—सुमिरि सीय नारद बचन उपजी प्रीति पुनीत ।
चकित बिलोकति सकल दिसि जनु सिसु मृगी सभीत ॥ २२९ ॥

Recollecting Nārada's words She was filled with innocent love; and with anxious eyes She gazed all round like a startled fawn. (229)

चौ०—कंकन किंकिनि नूपुर धुनि सुनि । कहत लखन सन रामु हृदयँ गुनि ॥
मानहुँ मदन दुंदुभी दीन्ही । मनसा बिस्व बिजय कहँ कीन्ही ॥ १ ॥
अस कहि फिरि चितए तेहि ओरा । सिय मुख ससि भए नयन चकोरा ॥
भए बिलोचन चारु अचंचल । मनहुँ सकुचि निमि तजे दिगंचल ॥ २ ॥
देखि सीय सोभा सुखु पावा । हृदयँ सराहत बचनु न आवा ॥
जनु बिरंचि सब निज निपुनाई । बिरचि बिस्व कहँ प्रगटि देखाई ॥ ३ ॥
सुंदरता कहुँ सुंदर करई । छबिगृहँ दीपसिखा जनु बरई ॥
सब उपमा कबि रहे जुठारी । केहिं पटतरौं बिदेहकुमारी ॥ ४ ॥

Hearing the tinkling of bangles, the small bells tied round the waist and the anklets Śrī Rāma thought within Himself and then said to Lakṣmaṇa, "It seems as if Cupid has sounded his kettledrum with intent to conquer the universe." So saying He looked once again in the same direction (whence the sound came); and lo! His eyes feasted themselves on Sītā's countenance even as the *Chakora* bird gazes on the moon. His charming eyes became motionless, as if Nimi* (the god of winking) had left the eyelids out of shyness. Śrī Rāma was filled with rapture to behold Sītā's beauty; He admired it in His heart, but utterance failed Him. He felt as if the Creator had put his whole creative skill in visible form and demonstrated it to the world at large. "She lends charm to Charm itself," He said to Himself, "and looks as if a flame of light is burning in a house of beauty. The similes already employed by the poets are all stale and hackneyed; to whom shall I liken the daughter of Videha ?"

(1—4)

दो०—सिय सोभा हियँ बरनि प्रभु आपनि दसा बिचारि ।
बोले सुचि मन अनुज सन बचन समय अनुहारि ॥ २३० ॥

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* Nimi was a forbear of King Janaka. On his death his spirit obtained a seat on the eyelids of human beings and has ever since remained there. The poet here figuratively attributes the motionlessness of Śrī Rāma's eyelids to the sudden departure therefrom of Nimi, who as a forbear of Janaka is described as loth to witness this exchange of pure love between Rāma and Sītā.

Thus describing to Himself Sītā's loveliness and reflecting on His own condition the Lord innocently spoke to His younger brother in terms appropriate to the occasion:— (230)

चौ०—तात जनकतनया यह सोई। धनुषजग्य जेहि कारन होई॥
पूजन गौरि सखीं लै आईं। करत प्रकासु फिरइ फुलवाईं॥ १॥
जासु बिलोकि अलौकिक सोभा। सहज पुनीत मोर मनु छोभा॥
सो सबु कारन जान बिधाता। फरकहिं सुभद अंग सुनु भ्राता॥ २॥
रघुबंसिन्ह कर सहज सुभाऊ। मनु कुपंथ पगु धरइ न काऊ॥
मोहि अतिसय प्रतीति मन केरी। जेहिं सपनेहुँ परनारि न हेरी॥ ३॥
जिन्ह कै लहहिं न रिपु रन पीठी। नहिं पावहिं परतिय मनु डीठी॥
मंगन लहहिं न जिन्ह कै नाहीं। ते नरबर थोरे जग माहीं॥ ४॥

"Brother, she is no other than the daughter of King Janaka, for whom the bow-sacrifice is being arranged. She has been escorted by her girl-companions to worship Goddess Gaurī and is moving about in the garden diffusing light all about her. My heart, which is naturally pure, is agitated by the sight of Her transcendent beauty. The reason of all this is known to God alone; but I tell you, brother, my right limbs are throbbing, which is an index of coming good fortune. It is a natural trait with the race of Raghu that they never set their heart on evil courses. As for Myself I am fully confident of My mind, which has never sought another's wife even in a dream. Rare in this world are those noble men who never turn their back on the foe in battle nor give their heart to or cast an amorous glance on another's wife, and from whom no beggar meets with a rebuff. (1—4)

दो०—करत बतकही अनुज सन मन सिय रूप लोभान।
मुख सरोज मकरंद छबि करइ मधुप इव पान॥ २३१॥

While Śrī Rāma was talking to His younger brother in this strain, His mind, which was enamoured of Sītā's beauty, was all the time drinking in the loveliness of Her countenance, like a bee sucking the nectar from a lotus. (231)

चौ०—चितवति चकित चहूँ दिसि सीता। कहँ गए नृपकिसोर मनु चिंता॥
जहँ बिलोक मृग सावक नैनी। जनु तहँ बरिस कमल सित श्रेनी॥ १॥
लता ओट तब सखिन्ह लखाए। स्यामल गौर किसोर सुहाए॥
देखि रूप लोचन ललचाने। हरषे जनु निज निधि पहिचाने॥ २॥
थके नयन रघुपति छबि देखें। पलकन्हिहूँ परिहरीं निमेषें॥
अधिक सनेहँ देह भै भोरी। सरद ससिहि जनु चितव चकोरी॥ ३॥
लोचन मग रामहि उर आनी। दीन्हे पलक कपाट सयानी॥
जब सिय सखिन्ह प्रेमबस जानी। कहि न सकहिं कछु मन सकुचानी॥ ४॥

Sītā looked timidly all round; Her mind was at a loss as to where the princes had gone. Wherever the fawn-eyed princess cast Her glance, a continuous stream of white lotuses seemed to rain there. Her companions then pointed out

to Her the two lovely brothers, the one dark, the other fair of hue, standing behind a fence of creepers. Beholding the beauty of the two princes Her eyes were filled with greed; they rejoiced as if they had discovered their long-lost treasure. The eyes became motionless at the sight of Śrī Rāma's loveliness; the eyelids too forgot to fall. Due to excess of love Her body-consciousness began to fail; it looked as if a Chakora bird was gazing at the autumnal moon. Receiving Śrī Rāma into the heart through the passage of the eyes, She cleverly shut Him up there by closing the doors of Her eyelids. When Her girl-companions found Sītā overpowered with love, they were too much abashed to utter a word. (1—4)

दो०—लताभवन तें प्रगट भे तेहि अवसर दोउ भाइ ।
निकसे जनु जुग बिमल बिधु जलद पटल बिलगाइ ॥ २३२ ॥

At that very moment the two brothers emerged from a bower. It looked as if a pair of spotless moons had shone forth tearing the veil of cloud (232)

चौ०—सोभा सीवँ सुभग दोउ बीरा । नील पीत जलजाभ सरीरा ॥
मोरपंख सिर सोहत नीके । गुच्छ बीच बिच कुसुम कली के ॥ १ ॥
भाल तिलक श्रमबिंदु सुहाए । श्रवन सुभग भूषन छबि छाए ॥
बिकट भृकुटि कच घूघरवारे । नव सरोज लोचन रतनारे ॥ २ ॥
चारु चिबुक नासिका कपोला । हास बिलास लेत मनु मोला ॥
मुखछबि कहि न जाइ मोहि पाहीं । जो बिलोकि बहु काम लजाहीं ॥ ३ ॥
उर मनि माल कंबु कल गीवा । काम कलभ कर भुज बलसींवा ॥
सुमन समेत बाम कर दोना । सावँर कुअँर सखी सुठि लोना ॥ ४ ॥

The two gallant heroes were the very perfection of beauty; their bodies resembled in hue a blue and a yellow lotus respectively. Charming peacock-feathers adorned their head, which had bunches of flower-buds stuck here and there. A sectarian mark and beads of perspiration glistened on their brow; while graceful pendants shed their lustre on their ears. With arched eyebrows and curly locks, eyes red as a lotus-bud and a lovely chin, nose and cheeks, their gracious smile was soul-enthralling. The beauty of their countenance was more than I can describe; it would put to shame a myriad Cupids. They had a string of jewels on their breast; their lovely neck resembled a conch-shell in its spiral shape; while their mighty arms vied with the trunk of a young elephant, who was the very incarnation of Cupid. With a cup of leaves full of flowers in His left hand the dark-hued prince, my dear, is most charming. (1—4)

दो०—केहरि कटि पट पीत धर सुषमा सील निधान ।
देखि भानुकुलभूषनहि बिसरा सखिन्ह अपान ॥ २३३ ॥

Beholding the Ornament of the solar race, who had a slender waist like that of a lion and was clad in yellow, and who was the very embodiment of beauty and amiability, Sītā's companions forgot their very existence. (233)

Worshipping Goddess Bhavānī

चौ०—धरि धीरजु एक आलि सयानी । सीता सन बोली गहि पानी ॥
बहुरि गौरि कर ध्यान करेहू । भूपकिसोर देखि किन लेहू ॥ १ ॥
सकुचि सीयँ तब नयन उघारे । सनमुख दोउ रघुसिंघ निहारे ॥
नख सिख देखि राम कै सोभा । सुमिरि पिता पनु मनु अति छोभा ॥ २ ॥
परबस सखिन्ह लखी जब सीता । भयउ गहरु सब कहहिं सभीता ॥
पुनि आउब एहि बेरिआँ काली । अस कहि मन बिहसी एक आली ॥ ३ ॥
गूढ़ गिरा सुनि सिय सकुचानी । भयउ बिलंबु मातु भय मानी ॥
धरि बड़ि धीर रामु उर आने । फिरी अपनपउ पितुबस जाने ॥ ४ ॥

Recovering herself, one of Her clever companions grasped Sītā by the hand and said to Her, "Meditate on Gaurī afterwards; why not behold the princes just now?" Sītā then bashfully opened Her eyes and saw the two lions of Raghu's race opposite Herself. Surveying Śrī Rāma's beauty from head to foot in the reverse order*, and remembering Her father's vow she felt much perturbed. When Sītā's companions saw Her thus overcome with love, they all cried in alarm: "We are late already." "Let us come again at this very hour tomorrow!" So saying one of them smiled within herself. Sītā blushed at this pregnant remark. She got afraid of Her mother; for She felt it was already late. Recovering Herself with considerable effort She received Śrī Rāma into Her heart and conscious of Her dependence on Her sire returned home. (1—4)

दो०—देखन मिस मृग बिहग तरु फिरइ बहोरि बहोरि ।
निरखि निरखि रघुबीर छबि बाढ़इ प्रीति न थोरि ॥ २३४ ॥

Under pretence of looking at a deer, bird or tree She turned again and again; and each time She gazed on the beauteous Hero of Raghu's race, Her love waxed not a little. (234)

चौ०—जानि कठिन सिवचाप बिसूरति । चली राखि उर स्यामल मूरति ॥
प्रभु जब जात जानकी जानी । सुख सनेह सोभा गुन खानी ॥ १ ॥
परम प्रेममय मृदु मसि कीन्ही । चारु चित्त भीतीं लिखि लीन्ही ॥
गई भवानी भवन बहोरी । बंदि चरन बोली कर जोरी ॥ २ ॥
जय जय गिरिबरराज किसोरी । जय महेस मुख चंद चकोरी ॥
जय गजबदन षडानन माता । जगत जननि दामिनि दुति गाता ॥ ३ ॥
नहिं तव आदि मध्य अवसाना । अमित प्रभाउ बेदु नहिं जाना ॥
भव भव बिभव पराभव कारिनि । बिस्व बिमोहनि स्वबस बिहारिनि ॥ ४ ॥

*Girls in India are coy by their very nature and would not have the audacity to look straight into the eyes of a suitor. Sītā, who is the very embodiment of feminine virtues and the ideal of Indian womanhood, is, therefore, depicted here as beginning Her survey of Śrī Rāma's beauty from His feet and gradually passing Her eyes to His head. It is unidiomatic in English to speak of one scanning a person from 'foot to head'; hence the order had to be reversed in the rendering. It was, however, necessary to point out this radical difference between the Western and Indian cultures; and hence the words 'in the reverse order' have been added to keep the sense of the original intact, while taking care not to allow the English idiom to suffer.

Drooping at the thought of the unyielding bow of Śiva, She proceeded with the image of the swarthy form in Her heart. When the Lord perceived that Janaka's Daughter, a fountain of bliss, affection, grace and goodness, was going, He sketched Her on the sheet of His heart with the soft ink of supreme love. Sītā then sought Bhavānī's temple and, adoring Her feet, prayed to Her with joined palms: "Glory, all glory to You, O Daughter of the mountain-king! Glory to You, who gaze on the countenance of the great Lord Śiva as a Chakora bird on the moon. Glory to You, O Mother of the elephant-headed Gaṇeśa and the six-faced Kārtikeya and mother of the universe with limbs shining as lightning. You have no beginning, middle or end; Your infinite glory is a mystery even to the Vedas. You are responsible for the birth, maintenance and destruction of the universe; You enchant the whole universe and carry on Your sports independently of others. (1—4)

दो०—पतिदेवता सुतीय महुँ मातु प्रथम तव रेख ।
महिमा अमित न सकहिं कहि सहस सारदा सेष ॥ २३५ ॥

"Of all good women who adore their husband as a god, Mother, You rank foremost. Your immeasurable greatness is more than a thousand Śāradās and Śeṣas could tell. (235)

चौ०—सेवत तोहि सुलभ फल चारी । बरदायनी पुरारि पिआरी ॥
देबि पूजि पद कमल तुम्हारे । सुर नर मुनि सब होहिं सुखारे ॥ १ ॥
मोर मनोरथु जानहु नीकें । बसहु सदा उर पुर सबही कें ॥
कीन्हेउँ प्रगट न कारन तेहीं । अस कहि चरन गहे बैदेहीं ॥ २ ॥
बिनय प्रेम बस भई भवानी । खसी माल मूरति मुसुकानी ॥
सादर सियँ प्रसादु सिर धरेऊ । बोली गौरि हरषु हियँ भरेऊ ॥ ३ ॥
सुनु सिय सत्य असीस हमारी । पूजिहि मन कामना तुम्हारी ॥
नारद बचन सदा सुचि साचा । सो बरु मिलिहि जाहिं मनु राचा ॥ ४ ॥

"The four-fold rewards of life (viz., religious merit, worldly riches, sensuous enjoyment and Liberation) are easily attainable through Your service, O bestower of boons, beloved of Śiva (the Slayer of Tripura)! All who adore Your lotus-feet, O Shining One, attain happiness, be they gods, men or sages. You know well my heart's longing, since You ever dwell in the town of every heart. That is why I have refrained from openly declaring it." With these words Videha's Daughter clasped the feet of the image. Bhavānī was overcome by Her meekness and devotion; the wreath on the image dropped and the idol smiled. Sītā reverently placed the divine gift on Her head. Gaurī's heart was filled with delight while She spoke, "Hear, Sītā, my infallible blessing: Your heart's desire shall be accomplished. Nārada's words are ever faultless and true; the suitor on whom Your heart is set shall, indeed, be Yours. (1—4)

छं०—मनु जाहिं राचेउ मिलिहि सो बरु सहज सुंदर साँवरो ।
करुना निधान सुजान सीलु सनेहु जानत रावरो ॥

एहि भाँति गौरि असीस सुनि सिय सहित हियँ हरषीं अली ।
तुलसी भवानिहि पूजि पुनि पुनि मुदित मन मंदिर चली ॥

"The dark-complexioned and naturally handsome suitor of whom You are enamoured shall, indeed, be Yours. The gracious and omniscient Lord is aware of Your fidelity and love." Sītā and all Her companions were delighted at heart to hear this blessing from Gaurī's lips. Worshipping Goddess Bhavānī again and again Sītā, says Tulasīdāsa, returned to Her abode, rejoicing in Her heart.

सो०—जानि गौरि अनुकूल सिय हिय हरषु न जाइ कहि ।
मंजुल मंगल मूल बाम अंग फरकन लगे ॥ २३६ ॥

Finding Gaurī favourably disposed towards Her, Sītā was more glad of heart than words can tell. Her left limbs began to throb, indicating Her good fortune. (236)

चौ०—हृदयँ सराहत सीय लोनाई । गुर समीप गवने दोउ भाई ॥
राम कहा सबु कौसिक पाहीं । सरल सुभाउ छुअत छल नाहीं ॥ १ ॥
सुमन पाइ मुनि पूजा कीन्ही । पुनि असीस दुहु भाइन्ह दीन्ही ॥
सुफल मनोरथ होहुँ तुम्हारे । रामु लखनु सुनि भए सुखारे ॥ २ ॥
करि भोजनु मुनिबर बिग्यानी । लगे कहन कछु कथा पुरानी ॥
बिगत दिवसु गुरु आयसु पाई । संध्या करन चले दोउ भाई ॥ ३ ॥
प्राची दिसि ससि उयउ सुहावा । सिय मुख सरिस देखि सुखु पावा ॥
बहुरि बिचारु कीन्ह मन माहीं । सीय बदन सम हिमकर नाहीं ॥ ४ ॥

Inwardly praising Sītā's beauty, the two brothers returned to their Guru (Viśwāmitra). Śrī Rāma related everything to Kauśika; for He was innocent of heart and free from all guile. Having got the flowers the sage performed his devotions and then blessed the two brothers, saying, "May your heart's desire be accomplished." Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were glad to hear the benediction. After finishing his meals the great and illumined hermit, Viśwāmitra, began to recite old legends. The day was thus spent, and obtaining the Guru's permission the two brothers proceeded to say their evening prayers. In the meantime the charming moon rose in the eastern horizon; perceiving that her orb resembled Sītā's face Śrī Rāma felt happy. The Lord then reasoned within Himself, "The queen of night bears no resemblance to Sītā. (1—4)

दो०—जनमु सिंधु पुनि बंधु बिषु दिन मलीन सकलंक ।
सिय मुख समता पाव किमि चंदु बापुरो रंक ॥ २३७ ॥

"Born of the ocean (with its salt water), with poison for her brother, dim and obscure by the day and with a dark spot in her orb, how can the poor and wretched moon be matched with Sītā's countenance ?* (237)

* The moon is one of the fourteen jewels (treasures of the world) that were churned out of the ocean by the joint efforts of the gods and demons at the dawn of creation. It is to this Puranic legend that the Lord refers to above. The very first product of this churning was poison, which was swallowed by Lord Śiva. It is in this sense that the moon is spoken of as having poison for a brother.

चौ०—घटइ बढ़इ बिरहिनि दुखदाई । ग्रसइ राहु निज संधिहिं पाई ॥
कोक सोकप्रद पंकज द्रोही । अवगुन बहुत चंद्रमा तोही ॥ १ ॥
बैदेही मुख पटतर दीन्हे । होइ दोषु बड़ अनुचित कीन्हे ॥
सिय मुख छबि बिधु ब्याज बखानी । गुर पहिं चले निसा बड़ि जानी ॥ २ ॥
करि मुनि चरन सरोज प्रनामा । आयसु पाइ कीन्ह बिश्रामा ॥
बिगत निसा रघुनायक जागे । बंधु बिलोकि कहन अस लागे ॥ ३ ॥
उयउ अरुन अवलोकहु ताता । पंकज कोक लोक सुखदाता ॥
बोले लखनु जोरि जुग पानी । प्रभु प्रभाउ सूचक मृदु बानी ॥ ४ ॥

"Again, the moon waxes and wanes; she is the curse of lovesick damsels and is devoured by Rāhu when she crosses the latter's orbit. She causes anguish to the Chakravāka (the ruddy goose) and withers the lotus. O moon, there are numerous faults in you. One would incur the blame of having done a highly improper act by comparing you with the countenance of Videha's daughter." Thus finding in the moon a pretext for extolling the beauty of Sītā's countenance and perceiving that the night had far advanced, Śrī Rāma returned to His Guru; and bowing at the sage's lotus feet and receiving his permission He retired to rest. At the close of night the Lord of Raghus woke; and looking towards His brother He began to speak thus, "Lo, brother, the day has dawned to the delight of the lotus, the Chakravāka and the whole world." Joining both of his palms Lakṣmaṇa gently spoke the following words indicative of the Lord's glory:— (1—4)

दो०—अरुनोदयँ सकुचे कुमुद उडगन जोति मलीन ।
जिमि तुम्हार आगमन सुनि भए नृपति बलहीन ॥ २३८ ॥

"The day having dawned, the lily has faded and the brightness of the stars is dimmed, just as at the news of Your arrival all the princes (assembled here) have grown faint. (238)

चौ०—नृप सब नखत करहिं उजिआरी । टारि न सकहिं चाप तम भारी ॥
कमल कोक मधुकर खग नाना । हरषे सकल निसा अवसाना ॥ १ ॥
ऐसेहिं प्रभु सब भगत तुम्हारे । होइहहिं टूटें धनुष सुखारे ॥
उयउ भानु बिनु श्रम तम नासा । दुरे नखत जग तेजु प्रकासा ॥ २ ॥
रबि निज उदय ब्याज रघुराया । प्रभु प्रतापु सब नृपन्ह दिखाया ॥
तव भुज बल महिमा उदघाटी । प्रगटी धनु बिघटन परिपाटी ॥ ३ ॥
बंधु बचन सुनि प्रभु मुसुकाने । होइ सुचि सहज पुनीत नहाने ॥
नित्यक्रिया करि गुरु पहिं आए । चरन सरोज सुभग सिर नाए ॥ ४ ॥
सतानंदु तब जनक बोलाए । कौसिक मुनि पहिं तुरत पठाए ॥
जनक बिनय तिन्ह आइ सुनाई । हरषे बोलि लिए दोउ भाई ॥ ५ ॥

"Though twinkling like stars, all the princes put together are unable to lift the thick darkness in the form of the bow. And just as lotuses and bees and the Chakravāka and various other birds rejoice over the termination

of night, even so, my lord, all Your devotees will be glad when the bow is broken. Lo, the sun is up and the darkness has automatically disappeared, the stars have vanished out of sight and light flashes upon the world. Under pretence of its rising, O Lord of Raghus, the sun has demonstrated to all the princes the glory of my lord (Yourself). It is in order to reveal the might of Your arms that the process of breaking the bow has been set into operation." The Lord smiled at these remarks of His brother. He who is pure by His very nature then performed the daily acts of purification and bathed, and after finishing the daily routine of prayer etc., called on His Guru and the two brothers bowed their graceful heads at his lotus feet. Meanwhile King Janaka summoned his preceptor Śatānanda and sent him at once to the sage Kauśika. Śatānanda communicated to Viśwāmitra Janaka's humble submission and Viśwāmitra gladly sent for the two brothers. (1—5)

दो०—सतानंद पद बंदि प्रभु बैठे गुर पहिं जाइ ।
चलहु तात मुनि कहेउ तब पठवा जनक बोलाइ ॥ २३९ ॥

Adoring Śatānanda's feet the Lord went and sat down by His Guru; the sage then said, "Come, my son; Janaka has sent for us. (239)

[PAUSE 8 FOR A THIRTY-DAY RECITATION]

[PAUSE 2 FOR A NINE-DAY RECITATION]

चौ०—सीय स्वयंबरु देखिअ जाई । ईसु काहि धौं देइ बड़ाई ॥
लखन कहा जस भाजनु सोई । नाथ कृपा तव जापर होई ॥ १ ॥
हरषे मुनि सब सुनि बर बानी । दीन्हि असीस सबहिं सुखु मानी ॥
पुनि मुनिबृंद समेत कृपाला । देखन चले धनुषमख साला ॥ २ ॥
रंगभूमि आए दोउ भाई । असि सुधि सब पुरबासिन्ह पाई ॥
चले सकल गृह काज बिसारी । बाल जुबान जरठ नर नारी ॥ ३ ॥
देखी जनक भीर भै भारी । सुचि सेवक सब लिए हँकारी ॥
तुरत सकल लोगन्ह पहिं जाहू । आसन उचित देहु सब काहू ॥ ४ ॥

"Let us go and see how Sītā elects her husband; we have yet to see whom Providence chooses to honour." Said Lakṣmaṇa, "He alone deserves glory, my lord, who enjoys your favour." The whole company of hermits rejoiced to hear these apt words and with a delighted heart they all gave their blessing to him. Accompanied by the whole throng of hermits the gracious Lord then proceeded to visit the arena intended for the bow-sacrifice. When the residents of the town got the news that the two brothers had reached the arena, they all sallied forth, oblivious of their homes and duties,—men and women, young and old and even children. When Janaka saw that a huge crowd had collected there, he sent for all his trusted servants and said, "Go and see all the people at once and marshal them to their proper seats." (1—4)

दो०—कहि मृदु बचन बिनीत तिन्ह बैठारे नर नारि ।
उत्तम मध्यम नीच लघु निज निज थल अनुहारि ॥ २४० ॥

Addressing soft and polite words to the citizens, the servants seated them all, both men and women, in their appropriate places, whether noble or middling, humble or low. (240)

चौ०—राजकुअँर तेहि अवसर आए । मनहुँ मनोहरता तन छाए ॥
गुन सागर नागर बर बीरा । सुंदर स्यामल गौर सरीरा ॥ १ ॥
राज समाज बिराजत रूरे । उडगन महुँ जनु जुग बिधु पूरे ॥
जिन्ह कें रही भावना जैसी । प्रभु मूरति तिन्ह देखी तैसी ॥ २ ॥
देखहिं रूप महा रनधीरा । मनहुँ बीर रसु धरें सरीरा ॥
डरे कुटिल नृप प्रभुहि निहारी । मनहुँ भयानक मूरति भारी ॥ ३ ॥
रहे असुर छल छोनिप बेषा । तिन्ह प्रभु प्रगट कालसम देखा ॥
पुरबासिन्ह देखे दोउ भाई । नरभूषन लोचन सुखदाई ॥ ४ ॥

Meanwhile there arrived the two princes, the very abodes of beauty as it were, both oceans of goodness, polished in manners and gallant heroes, charming of forms, the one dark and the other fair. Shining bright in the galaxy of princes, they looked like two full moons in a circle of stars. Everyone looked on the Lord's form according to the conception each had about Him. Those who were surpassingly staunch in battle gazed on His form as though He was the heroic sentiment personified. The wicked kings trembled at the sight of the Lord as if He had a most terrible form. The demons, who were cunningly disguised as princes, beheld the Lord as Death in visible form; while the citizens regarded the two brothers as the ornaments of humanity and the delight of their eyes.

(1—4)

दो०—नारि बिलोकहिं हरषि हियँ निज निज रुचि अनुरूप ।
जनु सोहत सिंगार धरि मूरति परम अनूप ॥ २४१ ॥

With joy in their heart the women saw Him according to the attitude of mind each had towards Him, as if the erotic sentiment itself had appeared in an utterly incomparable form. (241)

चौ०—बिदुषन्ह प्रभु बिराटमय दीसा । बहु मुख कर पग लोचन सीसा ॥
जनक जाति अवलोकहिं कैसें । सजन सगे प्रिय लागहिं जैसें ॥ १ ॥
सहित बिदेह बिलोकहिं रानी । सिसु सम प्रीति न जाति बखानी ॥
जोगिन्ह परम तत्त्वमय भासा । सांत सुद्ध सम सहज प्रकासा ॥ २ ॥
हरिभगतन्ह देखे दोउ भ्राता । इष्टदेव इव सब सुख दाता ॥
रामहि चितव भायँ जेहि सीया । सो सनेहु सुखु नहिं कथनीया ॥ ३ ॥
उर अनुभवति न कहि सक सोऊ । कवन प्रकार कहै कबि कोऊ ॥
एहि बिधि रहा जाहि जस भाऊ । तेहिं तस देखेउ कोसलराऊ ॥ ४ ॥

The wise saw the Lord in His cosmic form, with many faces, hands, feet, eyes and heads. And how did He appear to Janaka's kinsmen? Like one's own beloved relation. The queen, no less than the king, regarded Him with unspeakable love like a dear child. To the Yogīs (those ever united with God) He shone forth as no other than the highest truth, placid, unsullied, equipoised, and resplendent by Its very nature. The devotees of Śrī Hari beheld the two brothers as their beloved deity, the fountain of all joy. The emotion of love and joy with which Sītā gazed on Śrī Rāma was ineffable. She felt the emotion in Her breast, but could not utter it; how, then, can a poet describe it? In this way everyone regarded the Lord of Ayodhyā according to the attitude of mind each had towards Him. (1—4)

दो०—राजत राज समाज महुँ कोसलराज किसोर ।
सुंदर स्यामल गौर तन बिस्व बिलोचन चोर ॥ २४२ ॥

Thus shone in the assembly of kings the two lovely princes of Ayodhyā, the one dark and the other fair of form, catching the eyes of the whole universe. (242)

चौ०—सहज मनोहर मूरति दोऊ । कोटि काम उपमा लघु सोऊ ॥
सरद चंद निंदक मुख नीके । नीरज नयन भावते जी के ॥ १ ॥
चितवनि चारु मार मनु हरनी । भावति हृदय जाति नहिं बरनी ॥
कल कपोल श्रुति कुंडल लोला । चिबुक अधर सुंदर मृदु बोला ॥ २ ॥
कुमुदबंधु कर निंदक हाँसा । भृकुटी बिकट मनोहर नासा ॥
भाल बिसाल तिलक झलकाहीं । कच बिलोकि अलि अवलि लजाहीं ॥ ३ ॥
पीत चौतनीं सिरन्हि सुहाईं । कुसुम कलीं बिच बीच बनाईं ॥
रेखें रुचिर कंबु कल गीवाँ । जनु त्रिभुवन सुषमा की सीवाँ ॥ ४ ॥

Both were embodiments of natural grace; even millions of Cupids were a poor match for them. Their charming faces mocked the autumnal moon, and their lotus-like eyes were soul-ravishing. Their winning glances captivated the heart of even Cupid, they were so unspeakably endearing. With beautiful cheeks, ears adorned with swinging pendants, a charming chin and lips and a sweet voice, their smile ridiculed the moonbeams. With arched eyebrows and a beautiful nose, the sacred mark shone on their broad forehead, and their locks of hair put to shame a swarm of bees. Yellow caps of a rectangular shape, which were embroidered here and there with figures of flower-buds, adorned their heads. Their necks, which vied in their spiral form with a conch-shell bore a triple line, which constituted as it were the high watermark of beauty in all the three worlds. (1—4)

दो०—कुंजर मनि कंठा कलित उरन्हि तुलसिका माल ।
बृषभ कंध केहरि ठवनि बलनिधि बाहु बिसाल ॥ २४३ ॥

Their breast was adorned with necklaces of pearls found in an elephant's forehead and wreaths of Tulasī (basil) leaves. With shoulders resembling the hump of a bull they stood like lions and had mighty long arms. (243)

चौ०—कटि तूनीर पीत पट बाँधें । कर सर धनुष बाम बर काँधें ॥
पीत जग्य उपबीत सुहाए । नख सिख मंजु महाछबि छाए ॥ १ ॥
देखि लोग सब भए सुखारे । एकटक लोचन चलत न तारे ॥
हरषे जनकु देखि दोउ भाई । मुनि पद कमल गहे तब जाई ॥ २ ॥
करि बिनती निज कथा सुनाई । रंग अवनि सब मुनिहि देखाई ॥
जहँ जहँ जाहिं कुअँर बर दोऊ । तहँ तहँ चकित चितव सबु कोऊ ॥ ३ ॥
निज निज रुख रामहि सबु देखा । कोउ न जान कछु मरमु बिसेषा ॥
भलि रचना मुनि नृप सन कहेऊ । राजाँ मुदित महासुख लहेऊ ॥ ४ ॥

They bore at their back a quiver secured with a yellow cloth wrapped round their waist, and held an arrow in their right hand; while a bow and a charming sacred thread, also of yellow tint, were slung across their left shoulder. In short, the two princes were lovely from head to foot and were the very embodiments of great charm. Everyone who saw them felt delighted; people gazed at them with unwinking eyes and their pupils too did not move. King Janaka himself rejoiced to behold the two brothers; presently he went and clasped the sage's lotus feet. Paying him homage he related to him his story and showed him round the whole arena. Whithersoever the two elegant princes betook themselves, all regarded them with wonder. Every man found Śrī Rāma facing himself; but none could perceive the great mystery behind it. The sage told the king that the arrangements were splendid; and the king was highly satisfied and pleased to hear this. (1—4)

दो०—सब मंचन्ह तें मंचु एक सुंदर बिसद बिसाल ।
मुनि समेत दोउ बंधु तहँ बैठारे महिपाल ॥ २४४ ॥

Of all the tiers of raised seats one was beautiful, bright and capacious above all the rest; the king seated the two brothers along with the sage thereon. (244)

चौ०—प्रभुहि देखि सब नृप हियँ हारे । जनु राकेस उदय भएँ तारे ॥
असि प्रतीति सब के मन माहीं । राम चाप तोरब सक नाहीं ॥ १ ॥
बिनु भंजेहुँ भव धनुषु बिसाला । मेलिहि सीय राम उर माला ॥
अस बिचारि गवनहु घर भाई । जसु प्रतापु बलु तेजु गवाँई ॥ २ ॥
बिहसे अपर भूप सुनि बानी । जे अबिबेक अंध अभिमानी ॥
तोरेहुँ धनुषु ब्याहु अवगाहा । बिनु तोरें को कुअँरि बिआहा ॥ ३ ॥
एक बार कालउ किन होऊ । सिय हित समर जितब हम सोऊ ॥
यह सुनि अवर महिप मुसुकाने । धरमसील हरिभगत सयाने ॥ ४ ॥

All the kings were disheartened at the sight of the Lord, just as stars fade away with the rising of the full moon. For they all felt inwardly assured that Rāma would undoubtedly break the bow; or, even if the huge bow of Śiva proved too strong for Him, that Sītā would still place the garland of victory round His neck. They, therefore, said to one another, "Realizing

this, brothers, let us turn homewards, casting to the winds all glory, fame, strength and pride." Other princes, who were blinded with ignorance and pride, laughed at this and said, "Union with the princess is a far cry for Rāma, even if he succeeds in breaking the bow; who, then, can wed her without breaking it? Should Death himself for once come forth against us, even him we would conquer in battle for Sītā's sake." At this other princes, who were pious and sensible and devoted to Śrī Hari, smiled and said:— (1—4)

सो०—सीय बिआहबि राम गरब दूरि करि नृपन्ह के।
जीति को सक संग्राम दसरथ के रन बाँकुरे ॥ २४५ ॥

"Rāma will certainly marry Sītā to the discomfiture of these arrogant princes; for who can conquer in battle the valiant sons of Daśaratha? (245)

चौ०—ब्यर्थ मरहु जनि गाल बजाई। मन मोदकन्हि कि भूख बुताई ॥
सिख हमारि सुनि परम पुनीता। जगदंबा जानहु जियँ सीता ॥ १ ॥
जगत पिता रघुपतिहि बिचारी। भरि लोचन छबि लेहु निहारी ॥
सुंदर सुखद सकल गुन रासी। ए दोउ बंधु संभु उर बासी ॥ २ ॥
सुधा समुद्र समीप बिहाई। मृगजलु निरखि मरहु कत धाई ॥
करहु जाइ जा कहुँ जोइ भावा। हम तौ आजु जनम फलु पावा ॥ ३ ॥
अस कहि भले भूप अनुरागे। रूप अनूप बिलोकन लागे ॥
देखहिं सुर नभ चढ़े बिमाना। बरषहिं सुमन करहिं कल गाना ॥ ४ ॥

"Do not thus brag and throw away your lives in vain: hunger cannot be satiated with imaginary sweets. Listen to this my most salutary advice: be inwardly assured that Sītā is no other than the Mother of the universe. And recognizing the Lord of Raghus as the father of the universe, feast your eyes to their fill on His beauty. Fountains of joy and embodiments of all virtues, these two charming brothers have their abode in Śambhu's heart. Leaving an ocean of nectar, which is so near, why should you run in pursuit of a mirage and court death? Or else do whatever pleases you individually; we for our part have reaped today the fruit of our human birth." So saying, the good kings turned to gaze with affection on the picture of incomparable beauty; while in heaven the gods witnessed the spectacle from their aerial cars, and raining down flowers sang in melodious strains. (1—4)

दो०—जानि सुअवसरु सीय तब पठई जनक बोलाइ।
चतुर सखीं सुंदर सकल सादर चलीं लवाइ ॥ २४६ ॥

Finding it an appropriate occasion Janaka then sent for Sītā; and Her companions, all lovely and accomplished, escorted Her with due honour. (246)

चौ०—सिय सोभा नहिं जाइ बखानी। जगदंबिका रूप गुन खानी ॥
उपमा सकल मोहि लघु लागीं। प्राकृत नारि अंग अनुरागीं ॥ १ ॥
सिय बरनिअ तेइ उपमा देई। कुकबि कहाइ अजसु को लेई ॥
जौं पटतरिअ तीय सम सीया। जग असि जुबति कहाँ कमनीया ॥ २ ॥

गिरा मुखर तन अरध भवानी । रति अति दुखित अतनु पति जानी ॥
बिष बारुनी बंधु प्रिय जेही । कहिअ रमासम किमि बैदेही ॥ ३ ॥
जौं छबि सुधा पयोनिधि होई । परम रूपमय कच्छपु सोई ॥
सोभा रजु मंदरु सिंगारू । मथै पानि पंकज निज मारू ॥ ४ ॥

Sītā's beauty defies all description, Mother of the universe that She is and an embodiment of charm and excellence. All comparisons seem to me too poor; for they have affinity with the limbs of mortal women. Proceeding to depict Sītā with the help of those very similes, why should one earn the title of an unworthy poet and court ill-repute? Should Sītā be likened to any woman of this material creation, where in this world shall one come across such a lovely damsel? The goddess of speech (Saraswatī), for instance, is a chatterer, while Bhavānī possesses only half a body (the other half being represented by her lord, Śiva). And Rati (Love's consort) is extremely distressed by the thought of her husband being without a form. And it is quite out of the question to compare Videha's Daughter with Ramā, who has poison and spirituous liquor for her dear brothers. Supposing there was an ocean of nectar in the form of loveliness and the tortoise serving as a base for churning it was an embodiment of consummate beauty, and if splendour itself were to take the form of a cord, the erotic sentiment should crystallize and assume the shape of Mount Mandara and the god of love himself were to churn this ocean with his own hands,—

(1—4)

दो०—एहि बिधि उपजै लच्छि जब सुंदरता सुख मूल ।
तदपि सकोच समेत कबि कहहिं सीय समतूल ॥ २४७ ॥

And if from such churning were to be born a Lakṣmī, who was the source of all loveliness and joy, the poet would even then hesitatingly declare her as analogous to Sītā. (247)

चौ०—चलीं संग लै सखीं सयानी । गावत गीत मनोहर बानी ॥
सोह नवल तनु सुंदर सारी । जगत जननि अतुलित छबि भारी ॥ १ ॥
भूषन सकल सुदेस सुहाए । अंग अंग रचि सखिन्ह बनाए ॥
रंगभूमि जब सिय पगु धारी । देखि रूप मोहे नर नारी ॥ २ ॥
हरषि सुरन्ह दुंदुभीं बजाईं । बरषि प्रसून अपछरा गाईं ॥
पानि सरोज सोह जयमाला । अवचट चितए सकल भुआला ॥ ३ ॥
सीय चकित चित रामहि चाहा । भए मोहबस सब नरनाहा ॥
मुनि समीप देखे दोउ भाई । लगे ललकि लोचन निधि पाई ॥ ४ ॥

Sītā's clever companions escorted Her to the arena, singing songs in a charming voice. A beautiful Sārī (covering for the body) adorned Her youthful frame; the Mother of the universe was incomparable in Her exquisite beauty. Ornaments of all kinds had been beautifully set in their appropriate places, each limb having been decked by Her companions with great care. When Sītā stepped into the arena, men and women alike were fascinated by Her charms. The gods gladly sounded their kettledrums, while

celestial damsels rained down flowers in the midst of songs. In Her lotus-like hands sparkled the wreath of victory, as She cast a hurried glance at all the princes. While Sītā looked for Śrī Rāma with anxious heart, all the princes found themselves in the grip of infatuation. Presently Sītā discovered the two brothers by the side of the sage, and Her eyes greedily fell on them as on a long-lost treasure. (1—4)

दो०—गुरजन लाज समाजु बड़ देखि सीय सकुचानि ।
लागि बिलोकन सखिन्ह तन रघुबीरहि उर आनि ॥ २४८ ॥

Out of natural bashfulness that She felt in the presence of elders and at the sight of the vast assemblage, Sītā shrank into Herself; and drawing the Hero of Raghu's race into Her heart She turned Her eyes towards Her companions. (248)

चौ०—राम रूपु अरु सिय छबि देखें । नर नारिन्ह परिहरीं निमेषें ॥
सोचहिं सकल कहत सकुचाहीं । बिधि सन बिनय करहिं मन माहीं ॥ १ ॥
हरु बिधि बेगि जनक जड़ताई । मति हमारि असि देहि सुहाई ॥
बिनु बिचार पनु तजि नरनाहू । सीय राम कर करै बिबाहू ॥ २ ॥
जगु भल कहिहि भाव सब काहू । हठ कीन्हें अंतहुँ उर दाहू ॥
एहिं लालसाँ मगन सब लोगू । बरु साँवरो जानकी जोगू ॥ ३ ॥
तब बंदीजन जनक बोलाए । बिरिदावली कहत चलि आए ॥
कह नृपु जाइ कहहु पन मोरा । चले भाट हियँ हरषु न थोरा ॥ ४ ॥

Beholding Śrī Rāma's beauty and Sītā's loveliness men and women alike forgot to close their eyelids. All of them felt anxious in their heart but hesitated to speak; they inwardly prayed to the Creator, "Quickly take away, O Creator, Janaka's stupidity and give him right understanding like ours, so that the king without the least scruple may abandon his vow and give Sītā in marriage to Rāma. The world will speak well of him and the idea will find favour with all. On the other hand, if he persists in his folly, he shall have to rue it in the end. Everyone is absorbed in the ardent feeling that the dark-complexioned youth is a suitable match for Janaka's daughter." Then Janaka summoned the heralds, and they came eulogizing his race. The king said, "Go round and proclaim my vow." Forthwith they proceeded on their mission; there was not a little joy in their heart. (1—4)

दो०—बोले बंदी बचन बर सुनहु सकल महिपाल ।
पन बिदेह कर कहहिं हम भुजा उठाइ बिसाल ॥ २४९ ॥

The heralds then uttered these polite words, "Listen all princes: with our long arms uplifted we announce to you King Videha's vow:— (249)

चौ०—नृप भुजबलु बिधु सिवधनु राहू । गरुअ कठोर बिदित सब काहू ॥
रावनु बानु महाभट भारे । देखि सरासन गवँहिं सिधारे ॥ १ ॥
सोइ पुरारि कोदंडु कठोरा । राज समाज आजु जोइ तोरा ॥
त्रिभुवन जय समेत बैदेही । बिनहिं बिचार बरइ हठि तेही ॥ २ ॥

सुनि पन सकल भूप अभिलाषे । भटमानी अतिसय मन माखे ॥
परिकर बाँधि उठे अकुलाई । चले इष्टदेवन्ह सिर नाई ॥ ३ ॥
तमकि ताकि तकि सिवधनु धरहीं । उठइ न कोटि भाँति बलु करहीं ॥
जिन्ह के कछु बिचारु मन माहीं । चाप समीप महीप न जाहीं ॥ ४ ॥

"The might of arm of the various princes stands as the moon, while Śiva's bow is the planet Rāhu as it were; it is massive and unyielding, as is well-known to all. Even the great champions Rāvaṇa and Bāṇāsura quietly slipped away as soon as they saw the bow. Whoever in this royal assembly breaks today the yonder unbending bow of Śiva shall be unhesitatingly and insistently wedded by Videha's daughter and shall triumph over all the three worlds." Hearing the vow all the princes were filled with longing, while those who prided on their valour felt very indignant. Girding up their loins they rose impatiently and bowing their heads to their chosen deity went ahead. They cast an angry look at Śiva's bow, grappled with it with steady aim and exerted all their strength; but the bow refused to be lifted. Those princes, however, who had any sense at all did not even approach the bow. (1—4)

दो०—तमकि धरहिं धनु मूढ़ नृप उठइ न चलहिं लजाइ ।
मनहुँ पाइ भट बाहुबलु अधिकु अधिकु गरुआइ ॥ २५० ॥

Those foolish kings indignantly strained at the bow and retired in confusion when it refused to leave its position, as though it grew more and more bulky by absorbing the might of arm of each successive warrior. (250)

चौ०—भूप सहस दस एकहि बारा । लगे उठावन टरइ न टारा ॥
डगइ न संभु सरासनु कैसें । कामी बचन सती मनु जैसें ॥ १ ॥
सब नृप भए जोगु उपहासी । जैसें बिनु बिराग संन्यासी ॥
कीरति बिजय बीरता भारी । चले चाप कर बरबस हारी ॥ २ ॥
श्रीहत भए हारि हियँ राजा । बैठे निज निज जाइ समाजा ॥
नृपन्ह बिलोकि जनकु अकुलाने । बोले बचन रोष जनु साने ॥ ३ ॥
दीप दीप के भूपति नाना । आए सुनि हम जो पनु ठाना ॥
देव दनुज धरि मनुज सरीरा । बिपुल बीर आए रनधीरा ॥ ४ ॥

Ten thousand kings then proceeded all at once to raise it; but it baffled all attempts at moving it. Śambhu's bow did not stir in the same way as the mind of a virtuous lady refuses to yield to the words of a gallant. All the princes made themselves butts of ridicule like a recluse without dispassion. Helplessly forfeiting their fame, glory and great valour to the bow they returned. Confused and disheartened, the kings went and sat in the midst of their own company. Seeing the kings thus frustrated, King Janaka got impatient and spoke words as if in anger: "Hearing the vow made by me many a king has come from diverse parts of the globe; gods and demons in human form and many other heroes, staunch in fight, have assembled. (1—4)

दो०—कुअँरि मनोहर बिजय बड़ि कीरति अति कमनीय ।
पावनिहार बिरंचि जनु रचेउ न धनु दमनीय ॥ २५१ ॥

"A lovely bride, a grand triumph and splendid renown are the prize; but Brahmā, it seems, has not yet created the man who may break the bow and win the above rewards. (251)

चौ०—कहहु काहि यहु लाभु न भावा । काहुँ न संकर चाप चढ़ावा ॥
रहउ चढ़ाउब तोरब भाई । तिलु भरि भूमि न सके छड़ाई ॥ १ ॥
अब जनि कोउ माखै भट मानी । बीर बिहीन मही मैं जानी ॥
तजहु आस निज निज गृह जाहू । लिखा न बिधि बैदेहि बिबाहू ॥ २ ॥
सुकृतु जाइ जौं पनु परिहरऊँ । कुअँरि कुआरि रहउ का करऊँ ॥
जौं जनतेउँ बिनु भट भुबि भाई । तौ पनु करि होतेउँ न हँसाई ॥ ३ ॥
जनक बचन सुनि सब नर नारी । देखि जानकिहि भए दुखारी ॥
माखे लखनु कुटिल भइँ भौंहें । रदपट फरकत नयन रिसौंहें ॥ ४ ॥

"Tell me, who would not have this prize ? But none could string the bow. Let alone stringing or breaking it, there was not one of you, brothers, who could stir it even a grain's breadth from its place. Now no one who prides on his valour should feel offended, if I assert that there is no hero left on earth to my mind. Give up all hope and turn your faces homewards. It is not the will of Providence that Sītā should be married. All my religious merits shall be gone if I abandon my vow. The princess must remain a maid; what can I do ? Had I known, brothers, that there are no more heroes in the world, I would not have made myself a laughing-stock by undertaking such a vow." All who heard Janaka's words, men and women alike, felt distressed at the sight of Jānakī. Lakṣmaṇa, however, got incensed: his eyebrows were knit, his lips quivered and his eyes shot fire. (1—4)

दो०—कहि न सकत रघुबीर डर लगे बचन जनु बान ।
नाइ राम पद कमल सिरु बोले गिरा प्रमान ॥ २५२ ॥

For fear of Śrī Rāma he could not speak, though Janaka's words pierced his heart like an arrow; yet at last, bowing his head at Śrī Rāma's lotus-feet he spoke words which were impregnated with truth:— (252)

चौ०—रघुबंसिन्ह महुँ जहँ कोउ होई । तेहिं समाज अस कहइ न कोई ॥
कही जनक जसि अनुचित बानी । बिद्यमान रघुकुल मनि जानी ॥ १ ॥
सुनहु भानुकुल पंकज भानू । कहउँ सुभाउ न कछु अभिमानू ॥
जौं तुम्हारि अनुसासन पावौं । कंदुक इव ब्रह्मांड उठावौं ॥ २ ॥
काचे घट जिमि डारौं फोरी । सकउँ मेरु मूलक जिमि तोरी ॥
तव प्रताप महिमा भगवाना । को बापुरो पिनाक पुराना ॥ ३ ॥
नाथ जानि अस आयसु होऊ । कौतुक करौं बिलोकिअ सोऊ ॥
कमल नाल जिमि चाप चढ़ावौं । जोजन सत प्रमान लै धावौं ॥ ४ ॥

"In an assembly where any one of Raghu's race is present no one would dare speak such scandalous words as Janaka has done, even though conscious of the presence of Śrī Rāma, the Jewel of Raghu's race. (Turning towards his

brother, he added) "Listen, O Delighter of the solar race, I sincerely tell You, without any vain boasting: if I but have Your permission, I will lift the round world like a ball and smash it like an ill-baked earthen jar; and by the glory of Your majesty, O blessed Lord, I can break Mount Meru like a radish. What, then, is this wretched old bow ? Realizing this, my Lord, let me have Your command and see what wonders I work ! I will string the bow as though it were a lotus-stalk and run with it not less than eight hundred miles.

(1—4)

दो०—तोरौं छत्रक दंड जिमि तव प्रताप बल नाथ ।
जौं न करौं प्रभु पद सपथ कर न धरौं धनु भाथ ॥ २५३ ॥

"By the might of Your glory, O Lord, I will snap it like the stalk of a mushroom. Or, if I fail, I swear by Your feet never to handle a bow or quiver again." (253)

चौ०—लखन सकोप बचन जे बोले । डगमगानि महि दिग्गज डोले ॥
सकल लोग सब भूप डेराने । सिय हियँ हरषु जनकु सकुचाने ॥ १ ॥
गुर रघुपति सब मुनि मन माहीं । मुदित भए पुनि पुनि पुलकाहीं ॥
सयनहिं रघुपति लखनु नेवारे । प्रेम समेत निकट बैठारे ॥ २ ॥
बिस्वामित्र समय सुभ जानी । बोले अति सनेहमय बानी ॥
उठहु राम भंजहु भवचापा । मेटहु तात जनक परितापा ॥ ३ ॥
सुनि गुरु बचन चरन सिरु नावा । हरषु बिषादु न कछु उर आवा ॥
ठाढ़े भए उठि सहज सुभाएँ । ठवनि जुबा मृगराजु लजाएँ ॥ ४ ॥

As Lakṣmaṇa spoke these angry words, the earth shook and the elephants supporting the quarters tottered. The whole assembly, including all the princes, was struck with terror; Sītā felt delighted at heart, while Janaka blushed. The preceptor (Viśwāmitra), the Lord of Raghus and all the hermits were glad of heart and thrilled all over again and again. With a sign Śrī Rāma checked Lakṣmaṇa and made him sit beside Him. Perceiving that it was a propitious time, Viśwāmitra said in most endearing terms, "Up, Rāma, break the bow of Śiva and relieve Janaka, my boy, of his anguish." On hearing the Guru's words Śrī Rāma bowed His head at his feet; there was no joy or sorrow in His heart. He stood up in all His native grace, putting to shame a young lion by His elegant carriage.

(1—4)

दो०—उदित उदयगिरि मंच पर रघुबर बालपतंग ।
बिकसे संत सरोज सब हरषे लोचन भृंग ॥ २५४ ॥

As the Chief of the Raghus rose on His elevated seat like the morning sun appearing in the eastern horizon, all the saints were delighted like so many lotuses and their eyes were glad as bees at the return of day. (254)

चौ०—नृपन्ह केरि आसा निसि नासी । बचन नखत अवली न प्रकासी ॥
मानी महिप कुमुद सकुचाने । कपटी भूप उलूक लुकाने ॥ १ ॥

भए बिसोक कोक मुनि देवा । बरिसहिं सुमन जनावहिं सेवा ॥
गुर पद बंदि सहित अनुरागा । राम मुनिन्ह सन आयसु मागा ॥ २ ॥
सहजहिं चले सकल जग स्वामी । मत्त मंजु बर कुंजर गामी ॥
चलत राम सब पुर नर नारी । पुलक पूरि तन भए सुखारी ॥ ३ ॥
बंदि पितर सुर सुकृत सँभारे । जौं कछु पुन्य प्रभाउ हमारे ॥
तौ सिवधनु मृनाल की नाईं । तोरहुँ रामु गनेस गोसाईं ॥ ४ ॥

The hopes of the rival kings vanished as night and their boasts died away like the serried stars. The arrogant princes shrivelled up like the lilies and the false kings shrank away like owls. Sages and gods, like the Chakravāka bird, were rid of their sorrow and rained down flowers in token of their homage. Affectionately reverencing the Guru's feet Śrī Rāma asked leave of the holy fathers. The Lord of all creation then stepped forth in His natural grace with the tread of a noble and beautiful elephant in rut. As Śrī Rāma moved ahead all men and women of the city rejoiced and thrilled all over their body. Invoking the manes and gods and recalling their own past good deeds they prayed: "If our religious merits are of any value, O Lord Gaṇeśa, may Rāma snap the bow of Śiva as it were a lotus-stalk."

(1–4)

दो०—रामहि प्रेम समेत लखि सखिन्ह समीप बोलाइ ।
सीता मातु सनेह बस बचन कहइ बिलखाइ ॥ २५५ ॥

Lovingly gazing on Śrī Rāma and bidding her companions draw near, Sītā's mother spoke words full of anguish out of affection:— (255)

चौ०—सखि सब कौतुकु देखनिहारे । जेउ कहावत हितू हमारे ॥
कोउ न बुझाइ कहइ गुर पाहीं । ए बालक असि हठ भलि नाहीं ॥ १ ॥
रावन बान छुआ नहिं चापा । हारे सकल भूप करि दापा ॥
सो धनु राजकुअँर कर देहीं । बाल मराल कि मंदर लेहीं ॥ २ ॥
भूप सयानप सकल सिरानी । सखि बिधि गति कछु जाति न जानी ॥
बोली चतुर सखी मृदु बानी । तेजवंत लघु गनिअ न रानी ॥ ३ ॥
कहँ कुंभज कहँ सिंधु अपारा । सोषेउ सुजसु सकल संसारा ॥
रबि मंडल देखत लघु लागा । उदयँ तासु तिभुवन तम भागा ॥ ४ ॥

"Whosoever are called our friends, dear ones, are mere spectators of a show; no one urges the preceptor (Viśwāmitra) and tells him that the two princes are yet boys and that such insistence on his part is not desirable. Knowing that Rāvaṇa and Bāṇāsura did not even touch the bow and that all other kings were worsted in spite of all their boasts, strange that he should give the same bow into the hands of this young prince; can cygnets ever lift Mount Mandara? Good sense has taken leave of the king; and one does not know the dispensation of Providence, dear ones." One of her sharp-witted companions gently replied, "The glorious are not to be lightly regarded, O queen. What comparison is there between the sage

Agastya, who was born of a jar, and the vast ocean? Yet the sage drained it dry, and his good fame has spread throughout the world. The orb of the sun is so small to look at; but the moment it rises the darkness of all the three worlds disappears. (1—4)

दो०—मंत्र परम लघु जासु बस बिधि हरि हर सुर सर्ब।
महामत्त गजराज कहुँ बस कर अंकुस खर्ब ॥ २५६ ॥

"A sacred formula, indeed, is very small, although it has under its sway Brahmā, Hari, Hara and all other gods. A tiny goad governs the mightiest and most furious elephant. (256)

चौ०—काम कुसुम धनु सायक लीन्हे। सकल भुवन अपनें बस कीन्हे ॥
देबि तजिअ संसउ अस जानी। भंजब धनुषु राम सुनु रानी ॥ १ ॥
सखी बचन सुनि भै परतीती। मिटा बिषादु बढ़ी अति प्रीती ॥
तब रामहि बिलोकि बैदेही। सभय हृदयँ बिनवति जेहि तेही ॥ २ ॥
मनहीं मन मनाव अकुलानी। होहु प्रसन्न महेस भवानी ॥
करहु सफल आपनि सेवकाई। करि हितु हरहु चाप गरुआई ॥ ३ ॥
गननायक बरदायक देवा। आजु लगें कीन्हिउँ तुअ सेवा ॥
बार बार बिनती सुनि मोरी। करहु चाप गुरुता अति थोरी ॥ ४ ॥

"Armed with a bow and arrows of flowers Cupid has brought the whole universe under subjection. Realizing this, O good lady, give up all doubt; Rāma, O Queen, will assuredly break the bow; I tell you." The queen felt reassured at these words of her companion; her despondency was gone and her love for Śrī Rāma grew. Then, casting a glance towards Śrī Rāma, Videha's daughter implored with anxious heart each god in turn. She inwardly prayed in a distressed state of mind: "Be gracious to me, O great Lord Śiva and Bhavānī, and reward my services by lightening the weight of the bow out of affection for me. O god Gaṇeśa, the chief of Śiva's attendants, O bestower of boons, it is for this day that I have adored You. Listening to my repeated supplication, therefore, reduce the weight of the bow to a mere trifle." (1—4)

दो०—देखि देखि रघुबीर तन सुर मनाव धरि धीर।
भरे बिलोचन प्रेम जल पुलकावली सरीर ॥ २५७ ॥

Gazing repeatedly on the person of Śrī Rāma and summoning courage Sītā prayed to gods. Her eyes were filled with tears of love and the hair on Her body stood on their end. (257)

चौ०—नीकें निरखि नयन भरि सोभा। पितु पनु सुमिरि बहुरि मनु छोभा ॥
अहह तात दारुनि हठ ठानी। समुझत नहिं कछु लाभु न हानी ॥ १ ॥
सचिव सभय सिख देइ न कोई। बुध समाज बड़ अनुचित होई ॥
कहँ धनु कुलिसहु चाहि कठोरा। कहँ स्यामल मृदुगात किसोरा ॥ २ ॥
बिधि केहि भाँति धरौं उर धीरा। सिरस सुमन कन बेधिअ हीरा ॥
सकल सभा कै मति भै भोरी। अब मोहि संभुचाप गति तोरी ॥ ३ ॥

निज जड़ता लोगन्ह पर डारी । होहि हरुअ रघुपतिहि निहारी ॥
अति परिताप सीय मन माहीं । लव निमेष जुग सय सम जाहीं ॥ ४ ॥

She feasted Her eyes to their fill on Śrī Rāma's beauty; but then the thought of Her father's vow agitated Her mind. She said to Herself, "Alas, my father has made a terrible resolve having no regard to good or evil consequences. The ministers are afraid; therefore none of them gives him good counsel. It is all the more pity that it should be so in a conclave of wise men. While on this side stands the bow harder than adamant, on the other side we find that dark-complexioned prince of delicate frame and tender age. How then, O god, can I maintain my balance of mind ? Is a diamond ever pierced with the pointed end of a Śirīṣa flower ? The sense of the whole assembly has become dull; hence my only hope now lies in you, O Śambhu's bow. Imparting your heaviness to the assembly grow light yourself at the sight of (in proportion to the size of) Śrī Rāma." Sītā felt much agitated at heart; an instant hung heavy on Her as a hundred Yugas. (1—4)

दो०—प्रभुहि चितइ पुनि चितव महि राजत लोचन लोल ।
खेलत मनसिज मीन जुग जनु बिधु मंडल डोल ॥ २५८ ॥

Gazing now at the Lord and now at the ground, Her restless eyes sparkled as if two Cupid's fish disported themselves in the pail-like orb of the moon. (258)

चौ०—गिरा अलिनि मुख पंकज रोकी । प्रगट न लाज निसा अवलोकी ॥
लोचन जलु रह लोचन कोना । जैसें परम कृपन कर सोना ॥ १ ॥
सकुची ब्याकुलता बड़ि जानी । धरि धीरजु प्रतीति उर आनी ॥
तन मन बचन मोर पनु साचा । रघुपति पद सरोज चितु राचा ॥ २ ॥
तौ भगवानु सकल उर बासी । करिहि मोहि रघुबर कै दासी ॥
जेहि कें जेहि पर सत्य सनेहू । सो तेहि मिलइ न कछु संदेहू ॥ ३ ॥
प्रभु तन चितइ प्रेम तन ठाना । कृपानिधान राम सबु जाना ॥
सियहि बिलोकि तकेउ धनु कैसें । चितव गरुरु लघु ब्यालहि जैसें ॥ ४ ॥

Held captive within Her lotus-like mouth Her bee-like speech refused to stir out for fear of the night of modesty. Tears remained confined within the corner of Her eyes*, just as the gold of a stingy miser remains buried in a nook of his house. Sītā felt abashed when She perceived Her great agitation of mind; summoning up courage in Her heart, therefore, She confidently said to Herself, "If I am true to my vow in thought, word and deed, and if my mind is really attached to the lotus-feet of Śrī Rāma, I am sure God, who dwells in the heart of all, will make me Śrī Rāma's bondslave; for one gets united without doubt with him for whom one cherishes true love." Casting a glance at the Lord She resolved to love Him even at the cost of Her life. Śrī Rāma, the embodiment of compassion, understood it all; looking at Sītā He glanced at the bow as Garuḍa (the king of birds and a sworn enemy of serpents) would gaze on a poor little snake. (1—4)

* Shedding of tears is regarded in India as an ill-omen; therefore, on auspicious occasions Indian women would take particular care not to allow teara to drop from their eyes.

दो०—लखन लखेउ रघुबंसमनि ताकेउ हर कोदंडु ।
पुलकि गात बोले बचन चरन चापि ब्रह्मांडु ॥ २५९ ॥

When Lakṣmana perceived that the Jewel of Raghu's race had cast a glance at the bow of Hara, the hair on his body stood erect and he uttered the following words pressing the crust of the earth under his foot:— (259)

चौ०—दिसिकुंजरहु कमठ अहि कोला । धरहु धरनि धरि धीर न डोला ॥
रामु चहहिं संकर धनु तोरा । होहु सजग सुनि आयसु मोरा ॥ १ ॥
चाप समीप रामु जब आए । नर नारिन्ह सुर सुकृत मनाए ॥
सब कर संसउ अरु अग्यानू । मंद महीपन्ह कर अभिमानू ॥ २ ॥
भृगुपति केरि गरब गरुआई । सुर मुनिबरन्ह केरि कदराई ॥
सिय कर सोचु जनक पछितावा । रानिन्ह कर दारुन दुख दावा ॥ ३ ॥
संभुचाप बड़ बोहितु पाई । चढ़े जाइ सब संगु बनाई ॥
राम बाहुबल सिंधु अपारू । चहत पारु नहिं कोउ कड़हारू ॥ ४ ॥

"O elephants guarding the cardinal points, O divine tortoise*, O serpent-king, and O divine boar*, steadily hold the earth that it may not shake. Śrī Rāma seeks to break the bow of Śankara; therefore, listen to my command and be ready." When Rāma drew near to the bow, men and women present there invoked in His behalf the help of gods as well as of their past good deeds. The doubts and ignorance of all who had assembled there, the arrogance of the foolish kings, the proud pretensions of Paraśurāma (the Chief of Bhṛgu's race), the apprehension of gods and the great sages, the distress of Sītā, King Janaka's remorse and the fire of the queen's terrible agony—all these boarded together the great bark of Śambhu's bow, with whose help they sought to cross the boundless ocean of Śrī Rāma's strength of arm; but there was no helmsman to steer the ship. (1—4)

दो०—राम बिलोके लोग सब चित्र लिखे से देखि ।
चितई सीय कृपायतन जानी बिकल बिसेषि ॥ २६० ॥

Rāma first looked at the crowd of spectators and found them motionless as the figures of a drawing. The gracious Lord then turned His eyes towards Sītā and perceived Her in deep distress. (260)

चौ०—देखी बिपुल बिकल बैदेही । निमिष बिहात कलप सम तेही ॥
तृषित बारि बिनु जो तनु त्यागा । मुएँ करइ का सुधा तड़ागा ॥ १ ॥
का बरषा सब कृषी सुखानें । समय चुकें पुनि का पछितानें ॥
अस जियँ जानि जानकी देखी । प्रभु पुलके लखि प्रीति बिसेषी ॥ २ ॥

* The divine tortoise referred to here is the same who served as the base for churning the ocean of milk at the dawn of creation. And the divine boar refers to the manifestation of the Lord as a boar in order to lift the earth out of the waters in which the demon Hiraṇyākṣa had submerged it. The tortoise as well as the boar are represented here as ever holding the earth, conjointly with the serpent-king, the one on its back and the other on its tusks.

गुरहि प्रनामु मनहिं मन कीन्हा । अति लाघवँ उठाइ धनु लीन्हा ॥
दमकेउ दामिनि जिमि जब लयऊ । पुनि नभ धनु मंडलसम भयऊ ॥ ३ ॥
लेत चढावत खैंचत गाढ़ें । काहुँ न लखा देख सबु ठाढ़ें ॥
तेहि छन राम मध्य धनु तोरा । भरे भुवन धुनि घोर कठोरा ॥ ४ ॥

He found Videha's Daughter greatly agitated; every moment that passed hung on Her as a whole life-time of the universe. If a thirsty man dies for want of water, of what avail is a lake of nectar to him once he is dead. What good is a shower when the whole crop is dried up, what use repenting over an opportunity lost? Thinking thus within Himself the Lord looked at Janaka's Daughter and thrilled all over to perceive Her singular devotion. He inwardly made obeisance to His preceptor (Viśwāmitra), and took up the bow with great agility The bow gleamed like a flash of lightning as He grasped it in His hand And then it appeared like a circle in the sky. No one knew when He took it in His hands, strung it and drew it tight; everyone only saw Him standing (with the bow drawn). Instantly Śrī Rāma broke the bow in halves, the awful crash resounded through all the spheres (1—4)

छं०—भरे भुवन घोर कठोर रव रबि बाजि तजि मारगु चले ।
चिक्करहिं दिग्गज डोल महि अहि कोल कूरुम कलमले ॥
सुर असुर मुनि कर कान दीन्हें सकल बिकल बिचारहीं ।
कोदंड खंडेउ राम तुलसी जयति बचन उचारहीं ॥

The awful crash reached through the spheres; the horses of the sun-god strayed from their course; the elephants of the quarters trumpeted, the earth shook; the serpent-king, the divine boar and the divine tortoise fidgeted about. Gods, demons and sages put their hands to their ears, and all began anxiously to ponder the cause; but when they learnt, says Tulasīdāsa, that Śrī Rāma had broken the bow, they uttered shouts of victory.

सो०—संकर चापु जहाजु सागरु रघुबर बाहुबलु ।
बूड़ सो सकल समाजु चढ़ा जो प्रथमहिं मोह बस ॥ २६१ ॥

The bow of Śankara was the bark and Rāma's strength of arm was the ocean to be crossed with its aid. The whole host (of which we have spoken above), that had boarded the ship out of ignorance, was drowned (with the bark). (261)

चौ०—प्रभु दोउ चापखंड महि डारे । देखि लोग सब भए सुखारे ॥
कौसिकरूप पयोनिधि पावन । प्रेम बारि अवगाहु सुहावन ॥ १ ॥
रामरूप राकेसु निहारी । बढ़त बीचि पुलकावलि भारी ॥
बाजे नभ गहगहे निसाना । देवबधू नाचहिं करि गाना ॥ २ ॥
ब्रह्मादिक सुर सिद्ध मुनीसा । प्रभुहि प्रसंसहिं देहिं असीसा ॥
बरिसहिं सुमन रंग बहु माला । गावहिं किंनर गीत रसाला ॥ ३ ॥

रही भुवन भरि जय जय बानी । धनुषभंग धुनि जात न जानी ॥
मुदित कहहिं जहँ तहँ नर नारी । भंजेउ राम संभुधनु भारी ॥ ४ ॥

The Lord tossed on ground the two broken pieces of the bow, and everyone rejoiced at the sight. Viśwāmitra stood as the holy ocean, full of the sweet and unfathomable water of love Beholding Śrī Rāma's beauty, which represented the full moon, the sage felt an increasing thrill of joy, which may be compared to a rising tide in the ocean. Kettledrums sounded with great noise in the heavens; celestial damsels sang and danced. Brahmā and the other gods, Siddhas and great sages praised the Lord and gave Him blessings raining down wreaths and flowers of various colours; the Kinnaras (a class of demigods) sang melodious strains The shouts of victory re-echoed throughout the universe; the crash that followed the breaking of the bow was drowned in it. Everywhere men and women in their joy kept saying that Rāma had broken the massive bow of Śambhu. (1—4)

दो०—बंदी मागध सूतगन बिरुद बदहिं मतिधीर ।
करहिं निछावरि लोग सब हय गय धन मनि चीर ॥ २६२ ॥

Talented bards, minstrels and panegyrists sang praises, and everybody gave away horses, elephants, riches, jewels and raiments as an act of invocation of God's blessings on the youthful champion. (262)

चौ०—झाँझि मृदंग संख सहनाई । भेरि ढोल दुंदुभी सुहाई ॥
बाजहिं बहु बाजने सुहाए । जहँ तहँ जुबतिन्ह मंगल गाए ॥ १ ॥
सखिन्ह सहित हरषी अति रानी । सूखत धान परा जनु पानी ॥
जनक लहेउ सुखु सोचु बिहाई । पैरत थकें थाह जनु पाई ॥ २ ॥
श्रीहत भए भूप धनु टूटे । जैसें दिवस दीप छबि छूटे ॥
सीय सुखहि बरनिअ केहि भाँती । जनु चातकी पाइ जलु स्वाती ॥ ३ ॥
रामहि लखनु बिलोकत कैसें । ससिहि चकोर किसोरकु जैसें ॥
सतानंद तब आयसु दीन्हा । सीताँ गमनु राम पहिं कीन्हा ॥ ४ ॥

There was a crash of cymbals and tabors, conches and clarionets, drums and sweet-sounding kettledrums, both large and small; and many other charming instruments also played. Everywhere young women sang auspicious strains. The queen with her companions was much delighted, as though a withering crop of paddy had been refreshed by a shower. King Janaka was now care-free and felt gratified as if a tired swimmer had reached a shallow. The kings' countenance fell at the breaking of the bow, just as a lamp is dimmed at dawn of day. Sītā's delight could only be compared to that of a female Chātaka* bird on receiving a rain-drop when the sun is in the same longitude as the constellation named Swātī* (Arcturus). Lakṣmaṇa fixed his eyes on Rāma as the young of a Chakora bird gazes on the moon. Śatānanda then gave the word and Sītā advanced towards Rāma. (1—4)

*According to the Indian tradition a Chātaka bird would slake its thirst only with a rain-drop obtained when the sun is in the same longitude as the Arcturus (which is generally in the month of October, a month when showers are of rare occurrence).

दो०—संग सखीं सुंदर चतुर गावहिं मंगलचार ।
गवनी बाल मराल गति सुषमा अंग अपार ॥ २६३ ॥

Accompanied by Her fair and talented companions, who were singing festal songs, She paced like a cygnet, Her limbs possessing infinite charm. (263)

चौ०—सखिन्ह मध्य सिय सोहति कैसें । छबिगन मध्य महाछबि जैसें ॥
कर सरोज जयमाल सुहाई । बिस्व बिजय सोभा जेहिं छाई ॥ १ ॥
तन सकोचु मन परम उछाहू । गूढ़ प्रेमु लखि परइ न काहू ॥
जाइ समीप राम छबि देखी । रहि जनु कुअँरि चित्र अवरेखी ॥ २ ॥
चतुर सखीं लखि कहा बुझाई । पहिरावहु जयमाल सुहाई ॥
सुनत जुगल कर माल उठाई । प्रेम बिबस पहिराइ न जाई ॥ ३ ॥
सोहत जनु जुग जलज सनाला । ससिहि सभीत देत जयमाला ॥
गावहिं छबि अवलोकि सहेली । सियँ जयमाल राम उर मेली ॥ ४ ॥

In the midst of Her companions Sītā shone as a personification of supreme beauty among other embodiments of beauty. She held in one of Her lotus hands the fair wreath of victory, resplendent with the glory of triumph over the whole universe. While Her body shrank with modesty, Her heart was full of rapture; Her hidden love could not be perceived by others. As She drew near and beheld Śrī Rāma's beauty, Princess Sītā stood motionless as a portrait. A clever companion, who perceived Her in this condition, exhorted Her saying, "Invest the bridegroom with the beautiful wreath of victory." At this She raised the wreath with both of Her hands, but was too overwhelmed with emotion to garland Him. In this act Her uplifted hands shone as if a pair of lotuses with their stalks were timidly investing the moon with a wreath of victory. At this charming sight Her companions broke into a song, while Sītā placed the wreath of victory round Śrī Rāma's neck so as to adorn His breast. (1—4)

सो०—रघुबर उर जयमाल देखि देव बरिसहिं सुमन ।
सकुचे सकल भुआल जनु बिलोकि रबि कुमुदगन ॥ २६४ ॥

Witnessing the wreath of victory resting on Śrī Rāma's bosom, gods rained down flowers; while the kings all shrank in confusion like lilies at the rising of the sun. (264)

चौ०—पुर अरु ब्योम बाजने बाजे । खल भए मलिन साधु सब राजे ॥
सुर किंनर नर नाग मुनीसा । जय जय जय कहि देहिं असीसा ॥ १ ॥
नाचहिं गावहिं बिबुध बधूटीं । बार बार कुसुमांजलि छूटीं ॥
जहँ तहँ बिप्र बेदधुनि करहीं । बंदी बिरिदावलि उच्चरहीं ॥ २ ॥
महि पाताल नाक जसु ब्यापा । राम बरी सिय भंजेउ चापा ॥
करहिं आरती पुर नर नारी । देहिं निछावरि बित्त बिसारी ॥ ३ ॥
सोहति सीय राम कै जोरी । छबि सिंगारु मनहुँ एक ठोरी ॥
सखीं कहहिं प्रभुपद गहु सीता । करति न चरन परस अति भीता ॥ ४ ॥

There was music both in the city and in the heavens; while the wicked were downcast, the virtuous beamed with joy. Gods, Kinnaras, men, Nāgas and great sages uttered blessings with shouts of victory. Celestial dames danced and sang and handfuls of flowers were showered again and again. Here and there the Brahmans recited the Vedas, while panegyrists sang praises. The glad tidings spread throughout the earth, the subterranean regions and heaven that Śrī Rāma had broken the bow and won the hand of Sītā The people of the city waved lights round the pair in order to ward off evil; and regardless of their means they scattered gifts in profusion as an act of invocation of Divine blessings on the couple. The pair of Śrī Rāma and Sītā shone as if beauty and the sentiment of Love had met together in human form. Her companions urged Her. "Sītā, clasp your lord's feet." But Sītā was too much afraid to touch His feet. (1—4)

दो०—गौतम तिय गति सुरति करि नहिं परसति पग पानि ।
मन बिहसे रघुबंसमनि प्रीति अलौकिक जानि ॥ २६५ ॥

Remembering the fate of the sage Gautama's wife, Ahalyā, She would not touch His feet with Her hands; the Jewel of Raghu's race inwardly smiled to perceive Her transcendent love. (265)

चौ०—तब सिय देखि भूप अभिलाषे । कूर कपूत मूढ़ मन माखे ॥
उठि उठि पहिरि सनांह अभागे । जहँ तहँ गाल बजावन लागे ॥ १ ॥
लेहु छड़ाइ सीय कह कोऊ । धरि बाँधहु नृप बालक दोऊ ॥
तोरें धनुषु चाड़ नहिं सरई । जीवत हमहि कुअँरि को बरई ॥ २ ॥
जौं बिदेहु कछु करै सहाई । जीतहु समर सहित दोउ भाई ॥
साधु भूप बोले सुनि बानी । राजसमाजहि लाज लजानी ॥ ३ ॥
बलु प्रतापु बीरता बड़ाई । नाक पिनाकहि संग सिधाई ॥
सोइ सूरता कि अब कहुँ पांई । असि बुधि तौ बिधि मुहँ मसि लाई ॥ ४ ॥

Then, as they looked on Sītā, a few princes were filled with longing for Her; those wicked, degenerate fools grew indignant. Rising from their seats one after another and donning their armour the wretches began to brag about. Someone said, "Carry off Sītā by force and capturing the two princes hold them in bondage. No purpose will be served by merely breaking the bow; for who shall marry the princess while we still live? Should Janaka come forward to help them, rout him in battle along with the two brothers." When the good kings heard these words, they said, "Shame itself feels shy in approaching this assembly of princes. Your might, glory, valour, fame and honour have been shattered along with the bow. Is it the same valour of which you are boasting, or have you since acquired it anew from somewhere else? It is because such is your mentality that God has blackened your faces. (1—4)

दो०—देखहु रामहि नयन भरि तजि इरिषा मदु कोहु ।
लखन रोषु पावकु प्रबल जानि सलभ जनि होहु ॥ २६६ ॥

"Giving up jealousy, arrogance and anger, therefore, feast your eyes upon Rāma; and knowing Lakṣmaṇa's wrath to be a blazing fire, do not allow yourselves to be consumed by it like a moth. (266)

चौ०—बैनतेय बलि जिमि चह कागू। जिमि ससु चहै नाग अरि भागू॥
जिमि चह कुसल अकारन कोही। सब संपदा चहै सिवद्रोही॥ १॥
लोभी लोलुप कल कीरति चहई। अकलंकता कि कामी लहई॥
हरि पद बिमुख परम गति चाहा। तस तुम्हार लालचु नरनाहा॥ २॥
कोलाहलु सुनि सीय सकानी। सखीं लवाइ गईं जहँ रानी॥
रामु सुभायँ चले गुरु पाहीं। सिय सनेहु बरनत मन माहीं॥ ३॥
रानिन्ह सहित सोचबस सीया। अब धौं बिधिहि काह करनीया॥
भूप बचन सुनि इत उत तकहीं। लखनु राम डर बोलि न सकहीं॥ ४॥

"As a crow should seek an offering set apart for Garuḍa (the king of birds), as a rabbit should covet the share of a lion, as a man who is angry without any cause should expect happiness, as an enemy of Śiva should crave for riches of all kinds, as a greedy and covetous man should long for good fame and as a gallant should aspire to be free from scandal, and as one who is averse to Śrī Hari's feet should hanker after the highest destiny (Liberation), your longing, O princes, (for Sītā) is of the same category." When Sītā heard the tumult, She got afraid and Her companions took Her to the queen, while Śrī Rāma advanced to His Guru, easy in mind and inwardly praising Her affection. The queens as well as Sītā were filled with anxiety and wondered what Providence had in store for them. On hearing the words of the princes Lakṣmaṇa looked hither and thither; for fear of Rāma, however, he could not speak. (1—4)

दो०—अरुन नयन भृकुटी कुटिल चितवत नृपन्ह सकोप।
मनहुँ मत्त गजगन निरखि सिंघकिसोरहि चोप॥ २६७॥

With fiery eyes and knitted brows he cast an angry look at the kings, as though, at the sight of a herd of wild elephants in rut, a lion's whelp were eager to pounce on them. (267)

चौ०—खरभरु देखि बिकल पुर नारीं। सब मिलि देहिं महीपन्ह गारीं॥
तेहिं अवसर सुनि सिवधनु भंगा। आयउ भृगुकुल कमल पतंगा॥ १॥
देखि महीप सकल सकुचाने। बाज झपट जनु लवा लुकाने॥
गौरि सरीर भूति भल भ्राजा। भाल बिसाल त्रिपुंड बिराजा॥ २॥
सीस जटा ससिबदनु सुहावा। रिसबस कछुक अरुन होइ आवा॥
भृकुटी कुटिल नयन रिस राते। सहजहुँ चितवत मनहुँ रिसाते॥ ३॥
बृषभ कंध उर बाहु बिसाला। चारु जनेउ माल मृगछाला॥
कटि मुनिबसन तून दुइ बाँधें। धनु सर कर कुठारु कल काँधें॥ ४॥

Seeing the uproar the women of the city were all distressed and joined in cursing the princes That very moment arrived the sage Paraśurāma, a very sun to the lotus-like race of Bhṛgu, led by the news of the breaking of the bow. At

his very sight the kings all cowered down even as a quail would shrink beneath the swoop of a hawk. A coat of ashes looked most charming on his fair body; his broad forehead was adorned with a Tripuṇḍra (a speculiar mark consisting of three horizontal lines, sacred to Śiva) Having matted locks on the head, his handsome moon-like face was a bit reddened with anger; with knitted brows and eyes inflamed with passion, his natural look gave one the impression that he was enraged. He had well-built shoulders like those of a bull and a broad chest and long arms, he was adorned with a beautiful sacred thread, rosary and deerskin. With an anchorite's covering about his loins and a pair of quivers fastened by his side, he held a bow and arrows in his hands and an axe upon his fair shoulder. (1—4)

दो०—सांत बेषु करनी कठिन बरनि न जाइ सरूप।
धरि मुनितनु जनु बीर रसु आयउ जहँ सब भूप ॥ २६८ ॥

Though saintly in attire, he had a cruel record of deeds; his character, therefore, defied description. It looked as if the heroic sentiment had taken the form of a hermit and arrived where the kings had assembled. (268)

चौ०—देखत भृगुपति बेषु कराला। उठे सकल भय बिकल भुआला ॥
पितु समेत कहि कहि निज नामा। लगे करन सब दंड प्रनामा ॥ १ ॥
जेहि सुभायँ चितवहिं हितु जानी। सो जानइ जनु आइ खुटानी ॥
जनक बहोरि आइ सिरु नावा। सीय बोलाइ प्रनामु करावा ॥ २ ॥
आसिष दीन्हि सखीं हरषानीं। निज समाज लै गईं सयानीं ॥
बिस्वामित्रु मिले पुनि आई। पद सरोज मेले दोउ भाई ॥ ३ ॥
रामु लखनु दसरथ के ढोटा। दीन्हि असीस. देखि भल जोटा ॥
रामहि चितइ रहे थकि लोचन। रूप अपार मार मद मोचन ॥ ४ ॥

Beholding the frightful figure of Paraśurāma the kings all rose in consternation; and mentioning his own as well as his father's name, each fell prostrate on the ground before him. Even he on whom Paraśurāma cast a friendly look in a natural way thought the sands of his life had run out. Then came Janaka and bowed his head; and sending for Sītā he made Her pay homage to the sage Her companions rejoiced when he bestowed his blessing on Her, and cleverly took Her where the other ladies were. Next came Viśwāmitra, who met him and placed the two brothers at his lotus feet, saying that they were King Daśaratha's sons, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa by name; seeing the well-matched pair, he blessed them. His eyes were rivetted on Śrī Rāma's incomparable beauty, which would humble the pride of Cupid himself. (1—4)

दो०—बहुरि बिलोकि बिदेह सन कहहु काह अति भीर।
पूँछत जानि अजान जिमि ब्यापेउ कोपु सरीर ॥ २६९ ॥

Then he looked round, and though knowing everything, he asked Videha, like one ignorant, "Tell me, what has attracted all this crowd here ?" And as he spoke thus wrath took possession of his whole being. (269)

चौ०—समाचार कहि जनक सुनाए। जेहि कारन महीप सब आए॥
सुनत बचन फिरि अनत निहारे। देखे चापखंड महि डारे॥ १॥
अति रिस बोले बचन कठोरा। कहु जड़ जनक धनुष कै तोरा॥
बेगि देखाउ मूढ़ न त आजू। उलटउँ महि जहँ लहि तव राजू॥ २॥
अति डरु उतरु देत नृपु नाहीं। कुटिल भूप हरषे मन माहीं॥
सुर मुनि नाग नगर नर नारी। सोचहिं सकल त्रास उर भारी॥ ३॥
मन पछिताति सीय महतारी। बिधि अब सँवरी बात बिगारी॥
भृगुपति कर सुभाउ सुनि सीता। अरध निमेष कलप सम बीता॥ ४॥

Janaka narrated to him the whole history, mentioning what had brought all the kings there. On hearing this reply Paraśurāma turned round, and looking in the other direction he espied the fragments of the bow lying on the ground. Flying into a rage he spoke in harsh tones, "Tell me, O stupid Janaka, who has broken the bow? Show him at once, or this very day I will overthrow the whole tract of land over which your dominion extends." In his excess of fear, the king would make no answer, and the wicked kings were glad of heart Gods, sages, Nāgas and the people of the city were all filled with anxiety; their hearts were much agitated. Sītā's mother lamented within herself, saying, "Alas! God has undone an accomplished fact." When Sītā heard of Paraśurāma's temperament, even half a moment passed to Her like a whole life-time of the universe. (1—4)

दो०—सभय बिलोके लोग सब जानि जानकी भीरु।
हृदयँ न हरषु बिषादु कछु बोले श्रीरघुबीरु॥ २७०॥

When the Hero of Raghu's race saw everyone seized with panic and perceived Jānakī's anxiety, He interposed; there was neither joy nor sorrow in His heart. (270)

[PAUSE 9 FOR A THIRTY-DAY RECITATION]

चौ०—नाथ संभुधनु भंजनिहारा। होइहि केउ एक दास तुम्हारा॥
आयसु काह कहिअ किन मोही। सुनि रिसाइ बोले मुनि कोही॥ १॥
सेवकु सो जो करै सेवकाई। अरि करनी करि करिअ लराई॥
सुनहु राम जेहिं सिवधनु तोरा। सहसबाहु सम सो रिपु मोरा॥ २॥
सो बिलगाउ बिहाइ समाजा। न त मारे जैहहिं सब राजा॥
सुनि मुनि बचन लखन मुसुकाने। बोले परसुधरहि अपमाने॥ ३॥
बहु धनुहीं तोरीं लरिकाईं। कबहुँ न असि रिस कीन्हि गोसाईं॥
एहि धनु पर ममता केहि हेतू। सुनि रिसाइ कह भृगुकुलकेतू॥ ४॥

"My lord, it must be some one of your servants who has broken the bow of Śiva. What is your command? Why not tell me?" At this the furious sage was all the more incensed, and said, "A servant is he who does service; having played the role of an enemy, one should give battle. Listen, O Rāma,

whoever has broken Śiva's bow is my enemy no less than the thousand-armed Kārtavīrya. Let him stand apart, leaving this assembly; or else every one of these kings shall be slain." Hearing the sage's words Lakṣmaṇa smiled and said insulting Paraśurāma (the wielder of an axe), "I have broken many a small bow in my childhood; but you never grew so angry, my lord. Why should you be so fond of this particular bow?" At this the Chief of Bhṛgu's race burst out in a fury:— (1—4)

दो०—रे नृप बालक काल बस बोलत तोहि न सँभार ।
धनुही सम तिपुरारि धनु बिदित सकल संसार ॥ २७१ ॥

"O young prince, being in the grip of death you have no control over your speech. Would you compare to a small bow the mighty bow of Śiva, that is known throughout the world?" (271)

चौ०—लखन कहा हँसि हमरें जाना । सुनहु देव सब धनुष समाना ॥
का छति लाभु जून धनु तोरें । देखा राम नयन के भोरें ॥ १ ॥
छुअत टूट रघुपतिहु न दोसू । मुनि बिनु काज करिअ कत रोसू ॥
बोले चितइ परसु की ओरा । रे सठ सुनेहि सुभाउ न मोरा ॥ २ ॥
बालकु बोलि बधउँ नहिं तोही । केवल मुनि जड़ जानहि मोही ॥
बालब्रह्मचारी अति कोही । बिस्व बिदित छत्रियकुल द्रोही ॥ ३ ॥
भुजबल भूमि भूप बिनु कीन्ही । बिपुल बार महिदेवन्ह दीन्ही ॥
सहसबाहु भुज छेदनिहारा । परसु बिलोकु महीपकुमारा ॥ ४ ॥

Said Lakṣmaṇa with a smile, "Listen, holy Sir: to my mind all bows are alike. What gain or loss can there be in the breaking of a worn-out bow? Śrī Rāma mistook it for a new one, and at His very touch it broke in two; the Lord of Raghus, therefore, was not to blame for it either. Why, then, be angry, reverend sir, for no cause?" Casting a glance at his axe, Paraśurāma replied, "O foolish child, have you never heard of my temper? I slay you not because, as I say, you are a child yet, do you take me for a mere anchorite, O dullard? I have been a celibate from my very boyhood, but also an irascible one; and I am known throughout the world as a sworn enemy of the Kṣatriya race. By the might of my arm I made the earth kingless and bestowed it time after time upon the Brahmans. Look at this axe, which lopped off the arms of Sahasrabāhu (the thousand-armed Kārtavīrya), O youthful prince. (1—4)

दो०—मातु पितहि जनि सोचबस करसि महीसकिसोर ।
गर्भन्ह के अर्भक दलन परसु मोर अति घोर ॥ २७२ ॥

"Do not bring woe to your parents, O princely lad, My most cruel axe has exterminated even unborn offspring in the womb." (272)

चौ०—बिहसि लखनु बोले मृदु बानी । अहो मुनीसु महा भटमानी ॥
पुनि पुनि मोहि देखाव कुठारू । चहत उड़ावन फूँकि पहारू ॥ १ ॥
इहाँ कुम्हड़बतिया कोउ नाहीं । जे तरजनी देखि मरि जाहीं ॥
देखि कुठारु सरासन बाना । मैं कछु कहा सहित अभिमाना ॥ २ ॥

भृगुसुत समुझि जनेउ बिलोकी । जो कछु कहहु सहउँ रिस रोकी ॥
सुर महिसुर हरिजन अरु गाई । हमरें कुल इन्ह पर न सुराई ॥ ३ ॥
बधें पापु अपकीरति हारें । मारतहूँ पा परिअ तुम्हारें ॥
कोटि कुलिस सम बचनु तुम्हारा । ब्यर्थ धरहु धनु बान कुठारा ॥ ४ ॥

Lakṣmaṇa smilingly retorted in a mild tone, "Ah, the great sage considers himself an extraordinary warrior! He flaunts his axe before me again and again, as if he would blow away a mountain with a mere puff of breath Here there is no pumpkin in the bud that would wither away as soon as an index finger is raised against it. It was only when I saw you armed with an axe and a bow and arrows that I spoke with some pride Now that I understand you are a descendant of Bhṛgu and perceive a sacred thread on your person, I suppress my anger and put up with whatever you say. In our family valour is never shown against gods, the Brahmans, devotees of Śrī Hari and the cow; for by killing any of these we incur sin while a defeat at their hands will bring disrepute on us. We should throw ourselves at your feet even if you strike us. Every word of yours is as incisive as millions of thunderbolts; the bow and arrows and the axe are, therefore, an unnecessary burden to you. (1—4)

दो०—जो बिलोकि अनुचित कहेउँ छमहु महामुनि धीर ।
सुनि सरोष भृगुबंसमनि बोले गिरा गभीर ॥ २७३ ॥

"Pardon me, O great and illumined hermit, if I have said anything unseemly at the sight of your weapons" Hearing this, the jewel of Bhrghu's race furiously rejoined in a deep voice:— (273)

चौ०—कौसिक सुनहु मंद यहु बालकु । कुटिल काल बस निज कुल घालकु ॥
भानु बंस राकेस कलंकू । निपट निरंकुस अबुध असंकू ॥ १ ॥
काल कवलु होइहि छन माहीं । कहउँ पुकारि खोरि मोहि नाहीं ॥
तुम्ह हटकहु जौं चहहु उबारा । कहि प्रतापु बलु रोषु हमारा ॥ २ ॥
लखन कहेउ मुनि सुजसु तुम्हारा । तुम्हहि अछत को बरनै पारा ॥
अपनें मुहँ तुम्ह आपनि करनी । बार अनेक भाँति बहु बरनी ॥ ३ ॥
नहिं संतोषु त पुनि कछु कहहू । जनि रिस रोकि दुसह दुख सहहू ॥
बीरब्रती तुम्ह धीर अछोभा । गारी देत न पावहु सोभा ॥ ४ ॥

"Listen, O Viśwāmitra. this boy is stupid and perverse. He is in the grip of death himself and will bring destruction on his whole family. A dark spot on the moon-like solar race, he is utterly unruly, senseless and reckless. The very next moment he shall find himself in the jaws of death· I proclaim it at the top of my voice and none should blame me for it Forbid him if you would save him, telling him of my glory, might and fury." Said Lakṣmaṇa, "Holy sir, so long as you live who else can expatiate on your bright glory ? With your own lips you have recounted your exploits in diverse ways more than once If you are not yet satisfied, tell us something more; do not undergo a

severe trial by putting any restraint upon your anger You have assumed the role of a hero and are resolute and imperturbable, it is unbecoming of you to pour abuses.

(1—4)

दो०—सूर समर करनी करहिं कहि न जनावहिं आपु ।
बिद्यमान रन पाइ रिपु कायर कथहिं प्रतापु ॥ २७४ ॥

"Heroes perform valiant deeds in fight, but never indulge in self-advertisement. Finding before them a foe in battle, it is cowards who boast of their own glory. (274)

चौ०—तुम्ह तौ कालु हाँक जनु लावा । बार बार मोहि लागि बोलावा ॥
सुनत लखन के बचन कठोरा । परसु सुधारि धरेउ कर घोरा ॥ १ ॥
अब जनि देइ दोसु मोहि लोगू । कटुबादी बालकु बधजोगू ॥
बाल बिलोकि बहुत मैं बाँचा । अब यहु मरनिहार भा साँचा ॥ २ ॥
कौसिक कहा छमिअ अपराधू । बाल दोष गुन गनहिं न साधू ॥
खर कुठार मैं अकरुन कोही । आगें अपराधी गुरुद्रोही ॥ ३ ॥
उतर देत छोड़उँ बिनु मारें । केवल कौसिक सील तुम्हारें ॥
न त एहि काटि कुठार कठोरें । गुरहि उरिन होतेउँ श्रम थोरें ॥ ४ ॥

"You seem to have Death at your beck and call and summon him again and again for my sake !" Hearing Lakṣmaṇa's harsh words Paraśurāma closed his hand upon his terrible axe. "After this let no one blame me; this sharp-tongued boy, deserves his death. I have spared him long on account of his being a child; he is now surely going to die." Said Viśwāmitra, "Pardon his offence, holy men take no notice of the merits and demerits of a child." "Sharp-edged is my axe, while I am pitiless and furious; and here stands before me an offender and an enemy of my Guru. Even though he gives a retort, I spare his life solely out of regard for you, O Viśwāmitra. Or else, hacking him to pieces with this cruel axe, I would have easily repaid the debt I have owed to my Guru."

(1—4)

दो०—गाधिसूनु कह हृदयँ हँसि मुनिहि हरिअरइ सूझ ।
अयमय खाँड़ न ऊखमय अजहुँ न बूझ अबूझ ॥ २७५ ॥

Said Gādhi's son (Viśwāmitra) smiling within himself, "Everything looks green to the sage (Paraśurāma); it is, however, the steel sword that he is faced with and not with sugar extracted from a sugar-cane (that one could easily gulp). It is a pity that he does not understand and still persists in his ignorance*. (275)

* This has reference to a popular saying "A man who loses his eyesight in the month of Śrāvaṇa (corresponding roughly to August), when the whole landscape is green, visualizes everything as green." Viśwāmitra thereby suggests that Paraśurāma was blind so far as the greatness of Śrī Rāma is concerned and imagined that the latter was as easy to handle as the other Kṣatriyas whom he could easily vanquish in battle. Again there is a pun on the word 'Khāṇḍa' in the original, which means both a sword and sugar

चौ०—कहेउ लखन मुनि सीलु तुम्हारा। को नहिं जान बिदित संसारा॥
माता पितहि उरिन भए नीकें। गुर रिनु रहा सोचु बड़ जीकें॥ १॥
सो जनु हमरेहि माथे काढ़ा। दिन चलि गए ब्याज बड़ बाढ़ा॥
अब आनिअ ब्यवहरिआ बोली। तुरत देउँ मैं थैली खोली॥ २॥
सुनि कटु बचन कुठार सुधारा। हाय हाय सब सभा पुकारा॥
भृगुबर परसु देखावहु मोही। बिप्र बिचारि बचउँ नृपद्रोही॥ ३॥
मिले न कबहुँ सुभट रन गाढ़े। द्विज देवता घरहि के बाढ़े॥
अनुचित कहि सब लोग पुकारे। रघुपति सयनहिं लखनु नेवारे॥ ४॥

Said Lakṣmana, "Is there anyone, O good sage, who is not aware of your gentle disposition, so well known throughout the world? You have fully paid the debt you owed to your parents;* the only debt which now remains to be paid by you is the one you owe to your Guru, and that has been vexing your mind not a little It looks as if you had incurred the debt on our account; and since a considerable time has now elapsed a heavy interest has accumulated thereon. Now you get the creditor here and I will at once repay him from my own purse." Hearing these sarcastic remarks Paraśurāma grasped his axe and the whole assembly cried "Alack! Alack!!" "O chief of Bhṛgus, you are still threatening me with your axe, but I am sparing you only because I hold you to be a Brahman, O enemy of princes. You have never met champions staunch in fight, You have grown important in your own little home, O holy Brahman." Everyone exclaimed, "This is wholly undesirable!" The Lord of Raghus now becked Lakṣmaṇa to stop. (1—4)

दो०—लखन उतर आहुति सरिस भृगुबर कोपु कृसानु।
बढ़त देखि जल सम बचन बोले रघुकुलभानु॥ २७६॥

Perceiving the flames of Paraśurāma's passion grow with the pouring of oblation in the form of Lakṣmana's rejoinder, the Sun of Raghu's race spoke words like water. (276)

चौ०—नाथ करहु बालक पर छोहू। सूध दूधमुख करिअ न कोहू॥
जौं पै प्रभु प्रभाउ कछु जाना। तौ कि बराबरि करत अयाना॥ १॥
जौं लरिका कछु अचगरि करहीं। गुर पितु मातु मोद मन भरहीं॥
करिअ कृपा सिसु सेवक जानी। तुम्ह सम सील धीर मुनि ग्यानी॥ २॥

* There is a sarcastic allusion here to two notable incidents in Paraśurāma's life. We are told in the Purāṇas how Paraśurāma killed his own mother at the bidding of his father Jamadagni, who had got incensed at her returning from a river rather late. Pleased with his obedience Jamadagni insisted on his asking for a boon. At this Paraśurāma prayed for the restoration of his mother's life and his prayer was immediately granted. His mother was brought to life again and did not even remember the cruel act of her son. On another occasion, Paraśurāma's father Jamadagni was slain by the followers of King Sahasrabāhu in order to avenge themselves of their leader's death at Paraśurāma's hands and the latter retaliated by extirpating not only the descendants of Sahasrārjuna but the whole Kṣatriya race gradually.

राम बचन सुनि कछुक जुड़ाने । कहि कछु लखनु बहुरि मुसुकाने ॥
हँसत देखि नख सिख रिस ब्यापी । राम तोर भ्राता बड़ पापी ॥ ३ ॥
गौर सरीर स्याम मन माहीं । कालकूटमुख पयमुख नाहीं ॥
सहज टेढ़ अनुहरइ न तोही । नीचु मीचु सम देख न मोही ॥ ४ ॥

"My Lord, have compassion on a child; and wreak not your wrath on this guileless youngster (*lit.*, who has the mother's milk still on its lips). If he had any idea of your might, how could he be so foolish as to affront you ? If children play some pranks, their teacher and parents are in raptures at it; therefore, take pity on him, knowing him to be a child and your servant. For you are an even-minded, good-tempered, forbearing and illumined anchorite." On hearing Śrī Rāma's words Paraśurāma cooled down a little; but uttering something Lakṣmaṇa smiled again. Seeing him smile, Paraśurāma flushed all over with rage and said, "Rāma, your brother is too wicked. Though fair of hue, he is black at heart, he has deadly poison, and not the mother's milk on his lips. Perverse by nature, he does not take after you, nor does this vile imp regard me as the very image of Death." (1—4)

दो०—लखन कहेउ हँसि सुनहु मुनि क्रोधु पाप कर मूल ।
जेहि बस जन अनुचित करहिं चरहिं बिस्व प्रतिकूल ॥ २७७ ॥

Lakṣmaṇa smilingly said, "Listen, holy sir: passion is the root of sin. Swayed by it men perpetrate unseemly acts and indulge in misanthropic activities. (277)

चौ०—मैं तुम्हार अनुचर मुनिराया । परिहरि कोपु करिअ अब दाया ॥
टूट चाप नहिं जुरिहि रिसाने । बैठिअ होइहिं पाय पिराने ॥ १ ॥
जौं अति प्रिय तौ करिअ उपाई । जोरिअ कोउ बड़ गुनी बोलाई ॥
बोलत लखनहिं जनकु डेराहीं । मष्ट करहु अनुचित भल नाहीं ॥ २ ॥
थर थर काँपहिं पुर नर नारी । छोट कुमार खोट बड़ भारी ॥
भृगुपति सुनि सुनि निरभय बानी । रिस तन जरइ होइ बल हानी ॥ ३ ॥
बोले रामहि देइ निहोरा । बचउँ बिचारि बंधु लघु तोरा ॥
मनु मलीन तनु सुंदर कैसें । बिष रस भरा कनक घटु जैसें ॥ ४ ॥

"I am your servant, O chief of sages, put away your wrath and show mercy upon me. Anger will not mend the broken bow. Pray sit down; your legs must be aching. If you are very fond of it, let us devise some means to mend it by calling in some expert." Janaka was frightened at Lakṣmaṇa's words and said, "Pray be quiet; it is not good to transgress the limits of propriety." The people of the city trembled like aspen leaves; they said to themselves, "The younger prince is really very naughty." As the chief of Bhṛgus heard the fearless words of Lakṣmaṇa, his whole body burnt with rage and his strength diminished. In a condescending manner he said to Rāma, "I am sparing the boy because I know he is your younger brother. So fair without and foul within, he resembles a jar of gold full of poison." (1—4)

दो०—सुनि लछिमन बिहसे बहुरि नयन तरेरे राम ।
गुर समीप गवने सकुचि परिहरि बानी बाम ॥ २७८ ॥

At this Lakṣmaṇa laughed again, but Śrī Rāma cast an angry look on him. Therefore, putting away all petulance of speech he submissively went up to his Guru. (278)

चौ०—अति बिनीत मृदु सीतल बानी । बोले रामु जोरि जुग पानी ॥
सुनहु नाथ तुम्ह सहज सुजाना । बालक बचनु करिअ नहिं काना ॥ १ ॥
बररै बालकु एकु सुभाऊ । इन्हहि न संत बिदूषहिं काऊ ॥
तेहिं नाहीं कछु काज बिगारा । अपराधी मैं नाथ तुम्हारा ॥ २ ॥
कृपा कोपु बधु बँधब गोसाईं । मो पर करिअ दास की नाईं ॥
कहिअ बेगि जेहि बिधि रिस जाई । मुनिनायक सोइ करौं उपाई ॥ ३ ॥
कह मुनि राम जाइ रिस कैसें । अजहुँ अनुज तव चितव अनैसें ॥
एहि कें कंठ कुठारु न दीन्हा । तौ मैं काह कोपु करि कीन्हा ॥ ४ ॥

Joining both His palms together and speaking in most humble, gentle and placid tones Śrī Rāma said, "I pray you, my lord, wise as you are by nature, pay no heed to the words of a child. A wasp and a child have a like disposition; saints never find fault with them. Besides, the boy has done you no harm; it is I, my lord, who have offended you. Therefore, your reverence, deal to me as your servant whatever you please, whether it be a favour or frown, death or captivity. Tell me quickly the means, O chief of sages, by which your anger may be appeased; I shall do accordingly." Said the sage, "How can my passion be pacified, O Rāma, when your younger brother is still looking mischievously at me. So long as I do not cut his throat with my axe, my wrath is ineffectual. (1-4)

दो०—गर्भ स्रवहिं अवनिप रवनि सुनि कुठार गति घोर ।
परसु अछत देखउँ जिअत बैरी भूपकिसोर ॥ २७९ ॥

"At the very news of the cruel doings of my axe the consorts of kings miscarry. To think that having the same axe still at my service I should see this princeling, my enemy, alive ! (279)

चौ०—बहइ न हाथु दहइ रिस छाती । भा कुठारु कुंठित नृपघाती ॥
भयउ बाम बिधि फिरेउ सुभाऊ । मोरे हृदयँ कृपा कसि काऊ ॥ १ ॥
आजु दया दुखु दुसह सहावा । सुनि सौमित्रि बिहसि सिरु नावा ॥
बाउ कृपा मूरति अनुकूला । बोलत बचन झरत जनु फूला ॥ २ ॥
जौं पै कृपाँ जरिहिं मुनि गाता । क्रोध भएँ तनु राख बिधाता ॥
देखु जनक हठि बालकु एहू । कीन्ह चहत जड़ जमपुर गेहू ॥ ३ ॥
बेगि करहु किन आँखिन्ह ओटा । देखत छोट खोट नृप ढोटा ॥
बिहसे लखनु कहा मन माहीं । मूदें आँखि कतहुँ कोउ नाहीं ॥ ४ ॥

"My hand moves not, though passion consumes my breast, while this axe, which has slain kings without number, has gone blunt. Fate has turned against me, that is why I find my nature changed. Otherwise compassion at any time is unknown to my heart. My tenderness of feeling has imposed on me a severe strain today." On hearing this the son of Sumitrā bowed his head with a smile. "The breeze of your benevolence is so befitting your frame, the words you speak appear as though blossoms drop from a tree. O reverend sir, when compassion sets your whole frame on fire, God help you when you are angry" "Look here, Janaka, this stupid boy in his perversity intends to migrate to the region of Death. Why not put him out of my sight? Though small to look at, the princeling is yet so wicked!" Lakṣmaṇa smilingly said to himself, "Shut your eyes and the whole world will vanish out of your sight."

(1—4)

दो०—परसुरामु तब राम प्रति बोले उर अति क्रोधु ।
संभु सरासनु तोरि सठ करसि हमार प्रबोधु ॥ २८० ॥

Then Paraśurāma spoke to Rāma, his heart boiling with rage, "Having broken Śambhu's bow, O wretch, do you now teach me? (280)

चौ०—बंधु कहइ कटु संमत तोरें । तू छल बिनय करसि कर जोरें ॥
करु परितोषु मोर संग्रामा । नाहिं त छाड़ कहाउब रामा ॥ १ ॥
छलु तजि करहि समरु सिवद्रोही । बंधु सहित न त मारउँ तोही ॥
भृगुपति बकहिं कुठार उठाएँ । मन मुसुकाहिं रामु सिर नाएँ ॥ २ ॥
गुनह लखन कर हम पर रोषू । कतहुँ सुधाइहु ते बड़ दोषू ॥
टेढ़ जानि सब बंदइ काहू । बक्र चंद्रमहि ग्रसइ न राहू ॥ ३ ॥
राम कहेउ रिस तजिअ मुनीसा । कर कुठारु आगें यह सीसा ॥
जेहिं रिस जाइ करिअ सोइ स्वामी । मोहि जानिअ आपन अनुगामी ॥ ४ ॥

"It is with your connivance that your brother addresses such pungent words to me; while you make false entreaties with joined palms. Either give me satisfaction in combat, or forswear your name of 'Rāma'. Give battle to me, O enemy of Śiva, without taking recourse to any wily trick, or else I will despatch you and your brother both." While the chief of Bhṛgus thus raved with his axe raised on high, Śrī Rāma smiled within Himself, bowing His head to the sage, "While the fault is Lakṣmaṇa's, the sage's wrath is against me. Sometimes meekness too begets much evil. A crooked man is reverenced by all; the crescent moon is not devoured by the demon Rāhu." Said Rāma, "Cease from wrath, O lord of sages; the axe is in your hand, while my head is before you. Do that, my lord, which may pacify your anger; know me to be your servant.

(1—4)

दो०—प्रभुहि सेवकहि समरु कस तजहु बिप्रबर रोसु ।
बेषु बिलोकें कहेसि कछु बालकहू नहिं दोसु ॥ २८१ ॥

"How can there be any duel between a master and his servant ? Give up your anger, O great Brahman, it is only because he saw you in the garb of a warrior that the boy said something to you and he cannot be blamed for it. (281)

चौ०—देखि कुठारु बान धनु धारी। भै लरिकहि रिस बीरु बिचारी॥
नामु जान पै तुम्हहि न चीन्हा। बंस सुभायँ उतरु तेहिं दीन्हा॥ १॥
जौं तुम्ह औतेहु मुनि की नाईं। पद रज सिर सिसु धरत गोसाईं॥
छमहु चूक अनजानत केरी। चहिअ बिप्र उर कृपा घनेरी॥ २॥
हमहि तुम्हहि सरिबरि कसि नाथा। कहहु न कहाँ चरन कहँ माथा॥
राम मात्र लघु नाम हमारा। परसु सहित बड़ नाम तोहारा॥ ३॥
देव एकु गुनु धनुष हमारें। नव गुन परम पुनीत तुम्हारें॥
सब प्रकार हम तुम्ह सन हारे। छमहु बिप्र अपराध हमारे॥ ४॥

"Seeing you equipped with an axe, arrows and bow, the boy took you for a champion and got excited. Although he knew you by name, he did not recognize you in person and answered you according to his lineage. If you had come as a sage, the child, O holy sir, would have placed the dust of your feet on his head. Forgive the error of one who did not know you; a Brahman should have plenty of mercy in his heart. What comparison, my lord, can there be between you and me ? Tell me if there is any affinity between the head and feet. Mine is a small name consisting of the single word 'Rāma', whereas yours is a long one, having the word 'Paraśu' prefixed to 'Rāma'. Whereas there is only one string to my bow, yours has nine most sacred threads (viz., the Brahmanical cord). I am thus inferior to you in every way; therefore, O holy sir, forgive my faults." (1—4)

दो०—बार बार मुनि बिप्रबर कहा राम सन राम।
बोले भृगुपति सरुष हसि तहूँ बंधु सम बाम॥ २८२॥

Again and again did Rāma address His namesake as a sage and as a great Brahman, till the chief of Bhṛgus exclaimed in his fury, "You are as perverse as your younger brother ! (282)

चौ०—निपटहिं द्विज करि जानहि मोही। मैं जस बिप्र सुनावउँ तोही॥
चाप स्रुवा सर आहुति जानू। कोपु मोर अति घोर कृसानू॥ १॥
समिधि सेन चतुरंग सुहाई। महा महीप भए पसु आई॥
मैं एहिं परसु काटि बलि दीन्हे। समर जग्य जप कोटिन्ह कीन्हे॥ २॥
मोर प्रभाउ बिदित नहिं तोरें। बोलसि निदरि बिप्र के भोरें॥
भंजेउ चापु दापु बड़ बाढ़ा। अहमिति मनहुँ जीति जगु ठाढ़ा॥ ३॥
राम कहा मुनि कहहु बिचारी। रिस अति बड़ि लघु चूक हमारी॥
छुअतहिं टूट पिनाक पुराना। मैं केहि हेतु करौं अभिमाना॥ ४॥

"You know me to be a mere Brahman; I tell you what kind of a Brahman I am. Know that the bow is my sacrificial ladle, the arrows my oblation and my wrath, the blazing fire, the brilliant fourfold forces

(consisting of the horse, the elephant, the chariots and foot-soldiers) are the fuel; and mighty princes have served as victims, whom I have cut to pieces with this very axe and offered as sacrifice. In this way I have performed millions of sacrifices in the shape of armed conflicts, accompanied by the muttering of sacred formulas in the shape of war-cries. My glory is not known to you; that is why you address me in contemptuous terms mistaking me for a mere Brahman. Since you have broken the bow, your arrogance has transgressed all limits; in your self-esteem you stand as if you have conquered the whole world.'' Said Rāma, "O sage, think before you speak; your anger is out of all proportions with my error, which is a trifling one. Worn out as it was, the bow broke at my mere touch. What reason have I to be proud ?

(1—4)

दो०—जौं हम निदरहिं बिप्र बदि सत्य सुनहु भृगुनाथ ।
तौ अस को जग सुभटु जेहि भय बस नावहिं माथ ॥ २८३ ॥

"Hear the truth, O lord of the Bhṛgus: if, as you say, I treat you with disrespect because you are a Brahman, who is that gallant warrior in this world to whom I would bow my head out of fear ? (283)

चौ०—देव दनुज भूपति भट नाना । समबल अधिक होउ बलवाना ॥
जौं रन हमहि पचारै कोऊ । लरहिं सुखेन कालु किन होऊ ॥ १ ॥
छत्रिय तनु धरि समर सकाना । कुल कलंकु तेहिं पावँर आना ॥
कहउँ सुभाउ न कुलहि प्रसंसी । कालहु डरहिं न रन रघुबंसी ॥ २ ॥
बिप्रबंस कै असि प्रभुताई । अभय होइ जो तुम्हहि डेराई ॥
सुनि मृदु गूढ़ बचन रघुपति के । उघरे पटल परसुधर मति के ॥ ३ ॥
राम रमापति कर धनु लेहू । खैंचहु मिटै मोर संदेहू ॥
देत चापु आपुहिं चलि गयऊ । परसुराम मन बिसमय भयऊ ॥ ४ ॥

"A god, a demon, a king or a body of warriors, whether My equal in strength or more powerful than myself,—should any of these challenge me to combat, I would gladly fight with him, no matter if it is Death himself. For he who is born as a Kṣatriya, and is yet afraid of fighting, is a veritable wretch and has brought a slur on his lineage. I tell you in my natural way and not by way of a tribute to my race: Raghu's descendants do not tremble to meet in fight even Death. Such is the glory of the Brahman race that he who is afraid of you (Brahmans) is rid of all fear." When he heard these soft yet profound words of Śrī Rāma, Paraśurāma's mind was disillusioned. "O Rāma, take this bow of Ramā's lord and draw it, so that my doubts may be cleared"* As Paraśurāma offered his bow it passed into Rāma's hands of its own accord, and Paraśurāma felt amazed at this. (1—4)

दो०—जाना राम प्रभाउ तब पुलक प्रफुल्लित गात ।
जोरि पानि बोले बचन हृदयँ न प्रेमु अमात ॥ २८४ ॥

* Paraśurāma had got this bow from God Viṣṇu Himself, who had told him that when the Lord descended on the earth in the form of Śrī Rāma, his own life's work would have ended and the bow would pass into the hands of Śrī Rāma.

He then recognized Śrī Rāma's might and his whole frame was thrilled with joy and his hair stood on end Joining his palms together he addressed the following words to Śrī Rāma, his heart bursting with emotion —

(284)

चौ०—जय रघुबंस बनज बन भानू । गहन दनुज कुल दहन कृसानू ॥
जय सुर बिप्र धेनु हितकारी । जय मद मोह कोह भ्रम हारी ॥ १ ॥
बिनय सील करुना गुन सागर । जयति बचन रचना अति नागर ॥
सेवक सुखद सुभग सब अंगा । जय सरीर छबि कोटि अनंगा ॥ २ ॥
करौं काह मुख एक प्रसंसा । जय महेस मन मानस हंसा ॥
अनुचित बहुत कहेउँ अग्याता । छमहु छमामंदिर दोउ भ्राता ॥ ३ ॥
कहि जय जय जय रघुकुलकेतू । भृगुपति गए बनहि तप हेतू ॥
अपभयँ कुटिल महीप डेराने । जहँ तहँ कायर गवँहिं पराने ॥ ४ ॥

"Glory to Śrī Rāma, who delights Raghu's line even as the sun delights a cluster of lotuses ! Glory to the Fire that consumes the forest of the demon race ! Glory to the Benefactor of gods, Brahmans and cows ! Glory to Him who takes away pride, ignorance, passion and delusion ! Glory to Him who is an ocean of humility, amiability, compassion and goodness and a past-master in the art of speech. Glory to the Delighter of His servants and to Him who is graceful of every limb and whose form possesses the beauty of millions of Cupids ! How can I with one tongue utter Your praises ? Glory to Him who sports in the mind of the great Lord Śiva as a swan in the Mansarovar lake ! In my ignorance I have said much that was unseemly; therefore pardon me, both brothers, abodes of forgiveness that You are. Glory, glory, all glory to the Chief of Raghu's race !" So saying, the lord of Bhṛgus withdrew to the forest to practise penance. The wicked kings were all seized with imaginary fears and the cowards quietly fled in all directions (1—4)

दो०—देवन्ह दीन्हीं दुंदुभीं प्रभु पर बरषहिं फूल ।
हरषे पुर नर नारि सब मिटी मोहमय सूल ॥ २८५ ॥

The gods sounded their kettledrums and rained down flowers on the Lord. All the people of the city rejoiced and their heart's agony, born of ignorance, disappeared. (285)

चौ०—अति गहगहे बाजने बाजे । सबहिं मनोहर मंगल साजे ॥
जूथ जूथ मिलि सुमुखि सुनयनीं । करहिं गान कल कोकिलबयनीं ॥ १ ॥
सुखु बिदेह कर बरनि न जाई । जन्मदरिद्र मनहुँ निधि पाई ॥
बिगत त्रास भइ सीय सुखारी । जनु बिधु उदयँ चकोरकुमारी ॥ २ ॥
जनक कीन्ह कौसिकहि प्रनामा । प्रभु प्रसाद धनु भंजेउ रामा ॥
मोहि कृतकृत्य कीन्ह दुहुँ भाईं । अब जो उचित सो कहिअ गोसाईं ॥ ३ ॥
कह मुनि सुनु नरनाथ प्रबीना । रहा बिबाहु चाप आधीना ॥
टूटतहीं धनु भयउ बिबाहू । सुर नर नाग बिदित सब काहू ॥ ४ ॥

There was a tumultuous clash of musical instruments and everyone displayed charming and auspicious objects. Troops of fair-faced, bright-eyed damsels sang melodious songs in chorus, their voice resembling the notes of the cuckoo. Janaka's joy was beyond description, as that of a born beggar who has found a treasure. Sītā was rid of Her fears and was as glad as a young of a *Chakora* bird at the rising of the moon. Janaka made obeisance before Kauśika and said, "It is due to your grace, my lord, that Śrī Rāma has been able to break the bow. The two brothers have gained me my purpose; pray tell me now, reverend sir, what it behoves me to do." Said the sage, "Listen, wise king. the marriage depended on the bow, and took place directly the bow broke, as is well-known to all, including gods, human beings and Nāgas. (1—4)

दो०—तदपि जाइ तुम्ह करहु अब जथा बंस ब्यवहारु ।
बूझि बिप्र कुलबृद्ध गुर बेद बिदित आचारु ॥ २८६ ॥

"Nevertheless you now go and perform according to the family usage whatever practices are prescribed in the Veda, after consulting the Brahmans, the elders of your family, and your own preceptor (Śatānanda). (286)

चौ०—दूत अवधपुर पठवहु जाई । आनहिं नृप दसरथहि बोलाई ॥
मुदित राउ कहि भलेहिं कृपाला । पठए दूत बोलि तेहि काला ॥ १ ॥
बहुरि महाजन सकल बोलाए । आइ सबन्हि सादर सिर नाए ॥
हाट बाट मंदिर सुरबासा । नगरु सँवारहु चारिहुँ पासा ॥ २ ॥
हरषि चले निज निज गृह आए । पुनि परिचारक बोलि पठाए ॥
रचहु बिचित्र बितान बनाई । सिर धरि बचन चले सचु पाई ॥ ३ ॥
पठए बोलि गुनी तिन्ह नाना । जे बितान बिधि कुसल सुजाना ॥
बिधिहि बंदि तिन्ह कीन्ह अरंभा । बिरचे कनक कदलि के खंभा ॥ ४ ॥

"Go and despatch to the city of Ayodhyā messengers who may invite King Daśaratha and bring him here." Janaka gladly responded, "Very well, gracious sir," and summoning the messengers despatched them that very moment. He then summoned the leading citizens, and they all came and respectfully bowed their head. "Decorate the bazars, streets, houses, temples and the whole city on all its four sides," was the royal command. They returned in joy, each to his own house. The king then sent for his own servants and instructed them: "Erect pavilions of all kinds with due care." Bowing to the king's orders they returned glad of heart, and sent for a number of clever artisans skilled in erecting pavilions. Invoking Brahmā they set to work and made pillars of gold in the shape of plantain trees— (1—4)

दो०—हरित मनिन्ह के पत्र फल पदुमराग के फूल ।
रचना देखि बिचित्र अति मनु बिरंचि कर भूल ॥ २८७ ॥

—With leaves and fruits of emeralds and blossoms of rubies; seeing this most marvellous specimen of art the Creator himself was lost in bewilderment. (287)

चौ०—बेनु हरित मनिमय सब कीन्हे । सरल सपरब परहिं नहिं चीन्हे ॥
कनक कलित अहिबेलि बनाई । लखि नहिं परइ सपरन सुहाई ॥ १ ॥
तेहि के रचि पचि बंध बनाए । बिच बिच मुकुता दाम सुहाए ॥
मानिक मरकत कुलिस पिरोजा । चीरि कोरि पचि रचे सरोजा ॥ २ ॥
किए भृंग बहुरंग बिहंगा । गुंजहिं कूजहिं पवन प्रसंगा ॥
सुर प्रतिमा खंभन गढ़ि काढ़ी । मंगल द्रब्य लिएँ सब ठाढ़ी ॥ ३ ॥
चौकें भाँति अनेक पुराईं । सिंधुर मनिमय सहज सुहाईं ॥ ४ ॥

The bamboo sticks were all made of emeralds, they were so straight and knotted that they could not be distinguished from real ones. Creepers known by the name of Piper-betle (the leaves of which are chewed in India with areca-nut parings) were artistically fashioned in gold and looked so charming with their leaves that they could not be marked as artificial. These creepers were intertwined into so many cords (for holding the bamboos together) with beautiful strings of pearls inserted here and there After much cutting, carving and inlaying they made lotuses of rubies, emeralds, diamonds and turquoises They also fashioned bees and birds of varied plumage, which buzzed and whistled in the rustling breeze. On the pillars they sculptured images of gods, all standing with articles of good omen in their hands. Squares were drawn on the floor in various naturally charming devices and filled in with elephant pearls. (1—4)

दो०—सौरभ पल्लव सुभग सुठि किए नीलमनि कोरि ।
हेम बौर मरकत घवरि लसत पाटमय डोरि ॥ २८८ ॥

They made most lovely mango-leaves of graven sapphires with blossoms of gold and bunches of emerald fruits glistening on silken cords. (288)

चौ०—रचे रुचिर बर बंदनिवारे । मनहुँ मनोभवँ फंद सँवारे ॥
मंगल कलस अनेक बनाए । ध्वज पताक पट चमर सुहाए ॥ १ ॥
दीप मनोहर मनिमय नाना । जाइ न बरनि बिचित्र बिताना ॥
जेहिं मंडप दुलहिनि बैदेही । सो बरनै असि मति कबि केही ॥ २ ॥
दूलहु रामु रूप गुन सागर । सो बितानु तिहुँ लोक उजागर ॥
जनक भवन कै सोभा जैसी । गृह गृह प्रति पुर देखिअ तैसी ॥ ३ ॥
जेहिं तेरहुति तेहि समय निहारी । तेहि लघु लगहिं भुवन दस चारी ॥
जो संपदा नीच गृह सोहा । सो बिलोकि सुरनायक मोहा ॥ ४ ॥

They further made charming and excellent festoons, which looked like so many nooses prepared as it were by Cupid. They also put up many auspicious vases as well as beautiful flags and banners, curtains and chowries The marvellous pavilion with a number of beautiful lamps consisting of brilliant gems was beyond description. What poet has the wit wherewith to describe the pavilion which is going to shelter Videha's Daughter as the bride ? The canopy which is going to hold Śrī Rāma, the ocean of beauty and perfection, as the bridegroom, must be the glory of all the three worlds. The splendour

that belonged to King Janaka's palace was to be seen in every house of that city; to him who beheld Tirhut (Janaka's capital) during that time all the fourteen spheres* appeared of small account The prosperity that reigned in the house of the humblest citizen was enough to fascinate even the lord of celestials.

(1—4)

दो०—बसइ नगर जेहिं लच्छि करि कपट नारि बर बेषु ।
तेहि पुर कै सोभा कहत सकुचहिं सारद सेषु ॥ २८९ ॥

The magnificence of the city wherein dwelt Goddess Lakṣmī in the charming disguise of a mortal woman made even Śāradā (the goddess of eloquence) and (the thousand-tongued) Śeṣa falter in describing it. (289)

चौ०—पहुँचे दूत राम पुर पावन । हरषे नगर बिलोकि सुहावन ॥
भूप द्वार तिन्ह खबरि जनाई । दसरथ नृप सुनि लिए बोलाई ॥ १ ॥
करि प्रनामु तिन्ह पाती दीन्ही । मुदित महीप आपु उठि लीन्ही ॥
बारि बिलोचन बाँचत पाती । पुलक गात आई भरि छाती ॥ २ ॥
रामु लखनु उर कर बर चीठी । रहि गए कहत न खाटी मीठी ॥
पुनि धरि धीर पत्रिका बाँची । हरषी सभा बात सुनि साँची ॥ ३ ॥
खेलत रहे तहाँ सुधि पाई । आए भरतु सहित हित भाई ॥
पूछत अति सनेहँ सकुचाई । तात कहाँ तें पाती आई ॥ ४ ॥

Janaka's messengers arrived at Śrī Rāma's sacred birth-place and rejoiced to behold the charming city. They sent in word at the entrance of the royal palace, hearing of their arrival King Daśaratha summoned them to his presence. With due reverence they delivered the letter; and the king in his joy rose to receive it in person. As he read the letter, tears rushed to his eyes, the hair on his body stood erect and his heart was full. With Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa in his heart and the valuable letter in his hand, he remained mute and could not utter a word, either good or bad. Then, recovering himself, he read out the letter, and the court rejoiced to hear the authentic news. Obtaining the news at the very spot where he had been playing about Bharata came with his playmates and brother (Śatrughna), and with the utmost modesty and affection asked, "Father, where has the letter come from ? (1—4)

दो०—कुसल प्रानप्रिय बंधु दोउ अहहिं कहहु केहिं देस ।
सुनि सनेह साने बचन बाची बहुरि नरेस ॥ २९० ॥

"Are my two beloved brothers doing well and in what land do they happen to be ?" On hearing these words steeped in love the king read the letter over again. (290)

* According to Hindu scriptures the universe is divided into fourteen spheres, seven higher and seven lower. In their ascending order the seven higher spheres are named as Bhūḥ, Bhuvaḥ, Swaḥ, Mahaḥ, Janaḥ, Tapaḥ and Satyam, while the lower seven are in their descending order named as Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talātala, Mahātala, Rasātala and Pātāla.

चौ०—सुनि पाती पुलके दोउ भ्राता । अधिक सनेहु समात न गाता ॥
प्रीति पुनीत भरत कै देखी । सकल सभाँ सुखु लहेउ बिसेषी ॥ १ ॥
तब नृप दूत निकट बैठारे । मधुर मनोहर बचन उचारे ॥
भैआ कहहु कुसल दोउ बारे । तुम्ह नीकें निज नयन निहारे ॥ २ ॥
स्यामल गौर धरें धनु भाथा । बय किसोर कौसिक मुनि साथा ॥
पहिचानहु तुम्ह कहहु सुभाऊ । प्रेम बिबस पुनि पुनि कह राऊ ॥ ३ ॥
जा दिन तें मुनि गए लवाई । तब तें आजु साँचि सुधि पाई ॥
कहहु बिदेह कवन बिधि जाने । सुनि प्रिय बचन दूत मुसुकाने ॥ ४ ॥

On hearing the letter the two brothers experienced a thrill of joy; their whole frame was bursting with an excess of emotion. The whole court was particularly delighted to see Bharata's unalloyed love. The king then seated the messengers close by him and spoke to them in sweet and winning tones: "Tell me, friends, are the two boys well ? Have you seen them well with your own eyes ? The one dark and the other fair of hue, they are equipped with bow and quiver and are of tender age and accompanied by the sage Kauśika Do you recognize them ? If so, tell me something about their temperament." Overwhelmed with love the king asked thus again and again. "From the day the sage took them away it is only today that I have obtained authentic news about them. Tell me how King Videha was able to know them." At these fond words the messengers smiled. (1—4)

दो०—सुनहु महीपति मुकुट मनि तुम्ह सम धन्य न कोउ ।
रामु लखनु जिन्ह के तनय बिस्व बिभूषन दोउ ॥ २९१ ॥

"Listen, O crest-jewel of kings: there is no one so blessed as you, who have for your sons Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, the two ornaments of the universe. (291)

चौ०—पूछन जोगु न तनय तुम्हारे । पुरुषसिंघ तिहु पुर उजिआरे ॥
जिन्ह के जस प्रताप कें आगे । ससि मलीन रबि सीतल लागे ॥ १ ॥
तिन्ह कहँ कहिअ नाथ किमि चीन्हे । देखिअ रबि कि दीप कर लीन्हे ॥
सीय स्वयंबर भूप अनेका । समिटे सुभट एक तें एका ॥ २ ॥
संभु सरासनु काहुँ न टारा । हारे सकल बीर बरिआरा ॥
तीनि लोक महँ जे भटमानी । सभ कै सकति संभु धनु भानी ॥ ३ ॥
सकइ उठाइ सरासुर मेरू । सोउ हियँ हारि गयउ करि फेरू ॥
जेहिं कौतुक सिवसैलु उठावा । सोउ तेहि सभाँ पराभउ पावा ॥ ४ ॥

"No enquiry is needed in respect of your sons, who are lions among men and the light of the universe, and before whose renown and glory the moon looks dim and the sun appears cool. About them, my lord, you ask how they came to be recognized ! Does one take a lamp in one's hand to see the sun ? On the occasion of Sītā's self-election of her husband had assembled numerous princes, each one of whom was a greater champion than the rest, but not one of them could stir Śambhu's bow and all the mighty

heroes failed. The might of all those who were proud of their valour in the three worlds was crushed by it. Even the demon Bāṇa, who could lift Mount Meru, lost heart and retired after pacing round the bow, and even he (Rāvana) who had lifted up Mount Kailāsa (the abode of Śiva) in mere sport was worsted in that assembly. (1—4)

दो०—तहाँ राम रघुबंस मनि सुनिअ महा महिपाल ।
भंजेउ चाप प्रयास बिनु जिमि गज पंकज नाल ॥ २९२ ॥

"On that occasion, we submit, O great king, Śrī Rāma, the jewel of Raghu's race, snapped the bow without the least exertion even as an elephant would break the stalk of a lotus. (292)

चौ०—सुनि सरोष भृगुनायकु आए । बहुत भाँति तिन्ह आँखि देखाए ॥
देखि राम बलु निज धनु दीन्हा । करि बहु बिनय गवनु बन कीन्हा ॥ १ ॥
राजन रामु अतुलबल जैसें । तेज निधान लखनु पुनि तैसें ॥
कंपहिं भूप बिलोकत जाकें । जिमि गज हरि किसोर के ताकें ॥ २ ॥
देव देखि तव बालक दोऊ । अब न आँखि तर आवत कोऊ ॥
दूत बचन रचना प्रिय लागी । प्रेम प्रताप बीर रस पागी ॥ ३ ॥
सभा समेत राउ अनुरागे । दूतन्ह देन निछावरि लागे ॥
कहि अनीति ते मूदहिं काना । धरमु बिचारि सबहिं सुखु माना ॥ ४ ॥

"Hearing the news the chief of Bhṛgus came in a fury and indulged in much brow-beating. But seeing Śrī Rāma's strength he handed his bow to the latter and after much supplication withdrew to the woods. Even as Rāma, O king, is unequalled in strength, Lakṣmaṇa too is a mine of glory, at whose very sight the kings trembled as elephants at the gaze of a young lion. Now that we have seen your two sons, my lord, no one catches our eye any longer." The messengers' eloquent speech, which was full of love, glorifying and expressive of the heroic sentiment, attracted all. The king and his whole court were overwhelmed with emotion and began to offer lavish gifts to the messengers. They, however, closed their ears in protest crying, "This is unfair!" Everyone was delighted to note their sense of propriety.* (1—4)

दो०—तब उठि भूप बसिष्ठ कहुँ दीन्हि पत्रिका जाइ ।
कथा सुनाई गुरहि सब सादर दूत बोलाइ ॥ २९३ ॥

* In India not only the blood relations but even servants and co-villagers of a bride consider it sinful to accept even food or water, much less any gift or present, from the house of the bride-groom; for it is customary in this country to give the hand of a girl as a sacred gift and one is naturally reluctant to accept anything in return from him on whom a gift is made. This kind of sentiment prevails even in those cases where a marriage alliance has only been stipulated and not yet brought into actual effect. The messengers, in the above context, are actuated with a similar sentiment in refusing the gifts offered to them by King Daśaratha, who happened to be the father of the champion who had won the hand of Princess Jānakī, their master's daughter.

The king then rose and going up to Vasiṣṭha gave the letter to him, and sending for the messengers with due courtesy related the whole story to his preceptor. (293)

चौ०—सुनि बोले गुर अति सुखु पाई । पुन्य पुरुष कहुँ महि सुख छाई ॥
जिमि सरिता सागर महुँ जाहीं । जद्यपि ताहि कामना नाहीं ॥ १ ॥
तिमि सुख संपति बिनहिं बोलाएँ । धरमसील पहिं जाहिं सुभाएँ ॥
तुम्ह गुर बिप्र धेनु सुर सेबी । तसि पुनीत कौसल्या देबी ॥ २ ॥
सुकृती तुम्ह समान जग माहीं । भयउ न है कोउ होनेउ नाहीं ॥
तुम्ह ते अधिक पुन्य बड़ काकें । राजन राम सरिस सुत जाकें ॥ ३ ॥
बीर बिनीत धरम ब्रत धारी । गुन सागर बर बालक चारी ॥
तुम्ह कहुँ सर्ब काल कल्याना । सजहु बरात बजाइ निसाना ॥ ४ ॥

The Guru was highly pleased to hear the news and said, "To a virtuous man the world abounds in happiness. As rivers run into the sea, although the latter has no craving for them, so joy and prosperity come unasked and of their own accord to a pious soul. Just as you are given to the service of your preceptor, the Brahmans and cows as well as of gods, Queen Kausalyā is no less devout than you. A pious soul like you there has never been, nor is, nor shall be in this world. Who can be more blessed than you, O king, who have a son like Rāma, and whose four worthy children are all valiant, submissive, true to their vow of piety and oceans of goodness. You are blessed indeed for all time; therefore, prepare the marriage procession to the sound of kettledrums. (1—4)

दो०—चलहु बेगि सुनि गुर बचन भलेहिं नाथ सिरु नाइ ।
भूपति गवने भवन तब दूतन्ह बासु देवाइ ॥ २९४ ॥

"And proceed quickly." On hearing these words of the preceptor the king bowed his head and said, "Very well, my lord !" and after assigning lodgings to the messengers returned to his palace. (294)

चौ०—राजा सबु रनिवास बोलाई । जनक पत्रिका बाचि सुनाई ॥
सुनि संदेसु सकल हरषानीं । अपर कथा सब भूप बखानीं ॥ १ ॥
प्रेम प्रफुल्लित राजहिं रानी । मनहुँ सिखिनि सुनि बारिद बानी ॥
मुदित असीस देहिं गुर नारीं । अति आनंद मगन महतारीं ॥ २ ॥
लेहिं परस्पर अति प्रिय पाती । हृदयँ लगाइ जुड़ावहिं छाती ॥
राम लखन कै कीरति करनी । बारहिं बार भूपबर बरनी ॥ ३ ॥
मुनि प्रसादु कहि द्वार सिधाए । रानिन्ह तब महिदेव बोलाए ॥
दिए दान आनंद समेता । चले बिप्रबर आसिष देता ॥ ४ ॥

The king then called all the ladies of the gynaeceum and read aloud Janaka's letter to them. All rejoiced to hear the message and the king himself related the other tidings (which he had heard from the lips of the messengers). Bursting with emotion the queens shone like pea-hens rejoicing at

the rumbling of clouds. The preceptor's wife and the wives of other elders in their joy invoked the blessings of heaven and the mothers of the four brothers were overwhelmed with ecstasy. They took the most beloved letter from each other and pressing it to their bosom cooled their burning heart. The great king recounted again and again the glory and exploits of both Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. Saying that it was all due to the sage's grace he went out of doors The queens then sent for the Brahmans and joyfully bestowed gifts on them. And the Brahmans returned to their home uttering blessings.

(1—4)

सो०—जाचक लिए हँकारि दीन्हि निछावरि कोटि बिधि ।
चिरु जीवहुँ सुत चारि चक्रबर्ति दसरत्थ के ॥ २९५ ॥

Next they called the beggars and lavished innumerable kinds of gifts on them. "Long live the four sons of Emperor Daśaratha!" (295)

चौ०—कहत चले पहिरें पट नाना । हरषि हने गहगहे निसाना ॥
समाचार सब लोगन्ह पाए । लागे घर घर होन बधाए ॥ १ ॥
भुवन चारि दस भरा उछाहू । जनकसुता रघुबीर बिआहू ॥
सुनि सुभ कथा लोग अनुरागे । मग गृह गलीं सँवारन लागे ॥ २ ॥
जद्यपि अवध सदैव सुहावनि । राम पुरी मंगलमय पावनि ॥
तदपि प्रीति कै प्रीति सुहाई । मंगल रचना रची बनाई ॥ ३ ॥
ध्वज पताक पट चामर चारू । छावा परम बिचित्र बजारू ॥
कनक कलस तोरन मनि जाला । हरद दूब दधि अच्छत माला ॥ ४ ॥

Thus they shouted as they left, attired in raiment of various kinds; there was a jubilant and tempestuous clash of kettledrums. When the news spread among all the people, festivities were started in every house. All the fourteen spheres were filled with joy at the news of the forthcoming wedding of Janaka's daughter with the hero of Raghu's race The citizens were enraptured to hear the glad tidings and began to decorate the streets, houses and lanes Although the city of Ayodhyā is ever charming, being the blessed and sacred abode of Śrī Rāma, it was adorned with beautiful festal decorations because of the love the people bore towards the very embodiment of love. Flags and banners, curtains and graceful chowries canopied the bazars in a most marvellous fashion. With vases of gold, festal arches, festoons of netted gems, turmeric, blades of Dūrvā grass, curds, unbroken rice and wreaths of flowers—

(1—4)

दो०—मंगलमय निज निज भवन लोगन्ह रचे बनाइ ।
बीथीं सींचीं चतुरसम चौकें चारु पुराइ ॥ २९६ ॥

—The people decorated their respective houses, which were already full of blessings; the lanes were sprinkled over with water mixed with the fourfold pastes of sandal, saffron, musk and camphor and the squares in front of their houses were filled in with tasteful designs. (296)

चौ०—जहँ तहँ जूथ जूथ मिलि भामिनि । सजि नव सप्त सकल दुति दामिनि ॥
बिधुबदनीं मृग सावक लोचनि । निज सरूप रति मानु बिमोचनि ॥ १ ॥
गावहिं मंगल मंजुल बानीं । सुनि कल रव कलकंठि लजानीं ॥
भूप भवन किमि जाइ बखाना । बिस्व बिमोहन रचेउ बिताना ॥ २ ॥
मंगल द्रब्य मनोहर नाना । राजत बाजत बिपुल निसाना ॥
कतहुँ बिरिद बंदी उच्चरहीं । कतहुँ बेद धुनि भूसुर करहीं ॥ ३ ॥
गावहिं सुंदरि मंगल गीता । लै लै नामु रामु अरु सीता ॥
बहुत उछाहु भवनु अति थोरा । मानहुँ उमगि चला चहु ओरा ॥ ४ ॥

Collected here and there troops of ladies, all brilliant as the lightning, with moon-like face and eyes resembling those of a fawn and beauty enough to rob Love's consort (Rati) of her pride, and who had practised all the sixteen kinds of female adornment,* sang auspicious strains with voice so melodious that the female cuckoo was put to shame on hearing the sweet sound! How is the king's palace to be described; the pavilion set up there would dazzle the whole universe. Various articles of good omen and charming in appearance were displayed and a number of kettledrums were sounded. Here were panegyrists singing the family glory and here were Brahmans chanting the Vedas; while pretty women carolled festive songs, many times repeating the names of Rāma and Sītā. There was an excess of joy all round, while the palace was too small to contain it; it seemed, therefore, as if it overflowed on all sides.

(1—4)

दो०—सोभा दसरथ भवन कइ को कबि बरनै पार ।
जहाँ सकल सुर सीस मनि राम लीन्ह अवतार ॥ २९७ ॥

What poet can describe the splendour of Daśaratha's palace, in which Rāma, the crest-jewel of all divinities, had taken birth ? (297)

चौ०—भूप भरत पुनि लिए बोलाई । हय गय स्यंदन साजहु जाई ॥
चलहु बेगि रघुबीर बराता । सुनत पुलक पूरे दोउ भ्राता ॥ १ ॥
भरत सकल साहनी बोलाए । आयसु दीन्ह मुदित उठि धाए ॥
रचि रुचि जीन तुरग तिन्ह साजे । बरन बरन बर बाजि बिराजे ॥ २ ॥

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* According to the standard works on poetics the sixteen forms of female adornment are as follows:—(1) rubbing and cleansing the body with fragrant unguents, (2) ablution, (3) putting on a new attire, (4) dyeing the sides of one's feet with red lac, (5) dressing the hair, (6) adorning the parting line of the hair with red lead, (7) painting the forehead with streaks of sandal-paste, (8) dotting the chin with a small black spot, (9) colouring the palms of one's hands and the soles of one's feet with the reddish dye extracted from the leaves of the Menhdi plant, (10) anointing one's body with perfumed unguents, (11) adorning the body with bejewelled ornaments, (12) beautifying the hair etc., with wreaths of flowers, (13) perfuming and dyeing one's mouth by chewing betel-leaves etc., (14) colouring the teeth, (15) painting the lips red and (16) applying collyrium to one's eyes.

सुभग सकल सुठि चंचल करनी । अय इव जरत धरत पग धरनी ॥
नाना जाति न जाहिं बखाने । निदरि पवनु जनु चहत उड़ाने ॥ ३ ॥
तिन्ह सब छयल भए असवारा । भरत सरिस बय राजकुमारा ॥
सब सुंदर सब भूषनधारी । कर सर चाप तून कटि भारी ॥ ४ ॥

The king next called Bharata and said, "Go and prepare the horses, elephants and chariots and start at once in procession for Rāma's marriage " The two brothers were thrilled to hear this command Bharata sent for the officers in charge of the stables and issued necessary instructions; the latter rose in joy and hastened to execute the orders. They equipped the horses with gorgeous saddles; gallant steeds of different colours stood there in their majesty. They were all beautiful and surpassingly swift-footed; they trod the ground as lightly as though it were red-hot iron. They belonged to different breeds, which were more than one could tell, they would fly in the air, as it were, outstripping the wind itself. Gallant princes, who were of the same age as Bharata, mounted them The princes were all handsome and adorned with jewels and had a bow and arrow in their hands and a well-equipped quiver fastened at their side. (1—4)

दो०—छरे छबीले छयल सब सूर सुजान नबीन ।
जुग पदचर असवार प्रति जे असिकला प्रबीन ॥ २९८ ॥

They were elegant and blithesome youths, chosen and skilled warriors all; and with each knight were two footmen, clever at sword-play. (298)

चौ०—बाँधें बिरद बीर रन गाढ़े । निकसि भए पुर बाहेर ठाढ़े ॥
फेरहिं चतुर तुरग गति नाना । हरषहिं सुनि सुनि पनव निसाना ॥ १ ॥
रथ सारथिन्ह बिचित्र बनाए । ध्वज पताक मनि भूषन लाए ॥
चवँर चारु किंकिनि धुनि करहीं । भानु जान सोभा अपहरहीं ॥ २ ॥
सावँकरन अगनित हय होते । ते तिन्ह रथन्ह सारथिन्ह जोते ॥
सुंदर सकल अलंकृत सोहे । जिन्हहि बिलोकत मुनि मन मोहे ॥ ३ ॥
जे जल चलहिं थलहि की नाईं । टाप न बूड़ बेग अधिकाईं ॥
अस्त्र सस्त्र सबु साजु बनाई । रथी सारथिन्ह लिए बोलाई ॥ ४ ॥

The champions, who were all staunch in fight and had taken a vow of chivalry, sallied forth and halted outside the city. The clever fellows put their steeds through various paces and rejoiced to hear the clash of tabor and drum. The charioteers had made their cars equally gorgeous with flags and banners, gems and ornaments. They were also provided with elegant chowries and tinkling bells and outdid in splendour the chariot of the sun-god. The king owned numberless horses with dark ears,* which the charioteers yoked to their chariots. They were all beautiful and looked so charming with their ornaments that even sages would be enraptured at the sight They skimmed the surface of water even as dry land and would not sink even hoof-deep: so marvellous was their speed. Having provided the chariots with missiles and weapons and every other equipment the charioteers called their masters. (1—4)

* A rare and invaluable breed of horses, milk white all over and dark only in the ears, which were considered specially suitable for a horse-sacrifice.

दो०—चढ़ि चढ़ि रथ बाहेर नगर लागी जुरन बरात ।
होत सगुन सुंदर सबहि जो जेहि कारज जात ॥ २९९ ॥

Mounting the chariots the processionists began to collect outside the city. On whatever errand one went, each was greeted by auspicious omens. (299)

चौ०—कलित करिबरन्हि परीं अँबारीं । कहि न जाहिं जेहि भाँति सँवारीं ॥
चले मत्त गज घंट बिराजी । मनहुँ सुभग सावन घन राजी ॥ १ ॥
बाहन अपर अनेक बिधाना । सिबिका सुभग सुखासन जाना ॥
तिन्ह चढ़ि चले बिप्रबर बृंदा । जनु तनु धरें सकल श्रुति छंदा ॥ २ ॥
मागध सूत बंदि गुनगायक । चले जान चढ़ि जो जेहि लायक ॥
बेसर ऊँट बृषभ बहु जाती । चले बस्तु भरि अगनित भाँती ॥ ३ ॥
कोटिन्ह काँवरि चले कहारा । बिबिध बस्तु को बरनै पारा ॥
चले सकल सेवक समुदाई । निज निज साजु समाजु बनाई ॥ ४ ॥

On magnificent elephants were mounted splendid seats with canopies wrought in a manner beyond all description. Elephants in rut, adorned with clanging bells, headed like beautiful (rumbling) clouds in the rainy month of Śrāvaṇa (roughly corresponding to August). There were various kinds of other vehicles, such as charming palanquins, sedans etc., on which rode companies of noble Brahmans, incarnations, as it were, of all the hymns of the Vedas. Genealogists, bards, panegyrists and rhapsodists too rode on vehicles appropriate to their respective rank; while mules, camels and oxen of various breeds carried on their backs commodities of innumerable kinds. Millions of porters marched with burdens slung across their shoulders; who could enumerate the varieties of goods they carried ? Crowds of servants also proceeded on the journey equipping themselves in their own way and forming batches of their own. (1—4)

दो०—सब कें उर निर्भर हरषु पूरित पुलक सरीर ।
कबहिं देखिबे नयन भरि रामु लखनु दोउ बीर ॥ ३०० ॥

Each had boundless joy in his heart and a thrill ran through the bodies of all. They whispered to one another, "When shall we feast our eyes on the two heroes, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa ?" (300)

चौ०—गरजहिं गज घंटा धुनि घोरा । रथ रव बाजि हिंस चहु ओरा ॥
निदरि घनहि घुर्म्मरहिं निसाना । निज पराइ कछु सुनिअ न काना ॥ १ ॥
महा भीर भूपति के द्वारें । रज होइ जाइ पषान पबारें ॥
चढ़ी अटारिन्ह देखहिं नारीं । लिएँ आरती मंगल थारीं ॥ २ ॥
गावहिं गीत मनोहर नाना । अति आनंदु न जाइ बखाना ॥
तब सुमंत्र दुइ स्यंदन साजी । जोते रबि हय निंदक बाजी ॥ ३ ॥
दोउ रथ रुचिर भूप पहिं आने । नहिं सारद पहिं जाहिं बखाने ॥
राज समाजु एक रथ साजा । दूसर तेज पुंज अति भ्राजा ॥ ४ ॥

The elephants trumpeted and their bells clanged with a terrific din, on all sides there was a creaking of wheels and a neighing of horses The clash of kettledrums would drown the peal of thunder, no one could hear one's own words, much less of others. At the entrance of the king's palace, there was such an enormous crowd that a stone thrown there would be trodden into dust. Women viewed the sight from house-tops, carrying festal lights in salvers used on auspicious occasions, and carolled melodious strains of various kinds in an ecstasy of joy beyond description. Then Sumantra (King Daśaratha's own charioteer and trusted counsellor) got ready a pair of chariots and yoked them with steeds that would outrun even the horses of the sun-god, and brought them in all their splendour before the king; their beauty was more than goddess Śāradā could describe. One of them was equipped with the royal paraphernalia; while the other was a mass of splendour and shone brightly.

(1—4)

दो०—तेहिं रथ रुचिर बसिष्ठ कहुँ हरषि चढ़ाइ नरेसु ।
आपु चढ़ेउ स्यंदन सुमिरि हर गुर गौरि गनेसु ॥ ३०१ ॥

This magnificent chariot the king joyfully caused Vasiṣṭha to mount, and then himself ascended the other, with his thoughts fixed on Lord Hara, his preceptor (Vasiṣṭha), goddess Gaurī and the god Gaṇeśa. (301)

चौ०—सहित बसिष्ठ सोह नृप कैसें । सुर गुर संग पुरंदर जैसें ॥
करि कुल रीति बेद बिधि राऊ । देखि सबहि सब भाँति बनाऊ ॥ १ ॥
सुमिरि रामु गुर आयसु पाई । चले महीपति संख बजाई ॥
हरषे बिबुध बिलोकि बराता । बरषहिं सुमन सुमंगल दाता ॥ २ ॥
भयउ कोलाहल हय गय गाजे । ब्योम बरात बाजने बाजे ॥
सुर नर नारि सुमंगल गाईं । सरस राग बाजहिं सहनाईं ॥ ३ ॥
घंट घंटि धुनि बरनि न जाहीं । सरव करहिं पाइक फहराहीं ॥
करहिं बिदूषक कौतुक नाना । हास कुसल कल गान सुजाना ॥ ४ ॥

In the company of Vasiṣṭha the king shone forth as Indra (the lord of celestials) by the side of his preceptor (Bṛhaspati). After performing all the rites sanctioned by family usage or prescribed by the Vedas and seeing everyone fully equipped for the journey, he sallied forth to the blast of the conch-shell after receiving the permission of his preceptor and with his thoughts fixed on Śrī Rāma. The immortals rejoiced to see the marriage procession and rained down flowers full of auspicious blessings. There was a confused din of horses neighing, elephants trumpeting and music playing both in the heavens and in the procession. Human and celestial dames alike sang festal melodies, while clarionets played in sweet accord. There was an indescribable clamour of bells, both large and small. The footmen leaped and danced, displaying exercises of various kinds. Jesters, proficient in pleasantry and expert in singing melodious songs, practised all kinds of buffoonery.

(1—4)

दो०—तुरग नचावहिं कुअँर बर अकनि मृदंग निसान ।
नागर नट चितवहिं चकित डगहिं न ताल बँधान ॥ ३०२ ॥

Gallant princes made their steeds curvet to the measured beat of tabors and kettledrums, accomplished dancers noted with surprise that they never made a step out of time. (302)

चौ०—बनइ न बरनत बनी बराता। होहिं सगुन सुंदर सुभदाता॥
चारा चाषु बाम दिसि लेई। मनहुँ सकल मंगल कहि देई॥ १॥
दाहिन काग सुखेत सुहावा। नकुल दरसु सब काहूँ पावा॥
सानुकूल बह त्रिबिध बयारी। सघट सबाल आव बर नारी॥ २॥
लोवा फिरि फिरि दरसु देखावा। सुरभी सनमुख सिसुहि पिआवा॥
मृगमाला फिरि दाहिनि आई। मंगल गन जनु दीन्हि देखाई॥ ३॥
छेमकरी कह छेम बिसेषी। स्यामा बाम सुतरु पर देखी॥
सनमुख आयउ दधि अरु मीना। कर पुस्तक दुइ बिप्र प्रबीना॥ ४॥

The splendour of the marriage procession was more than one could describe. Fair and auspicious omens occurred. The blue-necked jay picked up food on the left and announced as it were all good fortune On a fair field in the right appeared a crow, and a mongoose was seen by all. A soft, cool and fragrant breeze was blowing in a favourable direction, a blessed (unwidowed) woman appeared with a pitcher and a child in her arms. A fox turned round and showed himself again and again and a cow suckled its calf in front of the procession, a herd of deer came round to the right, as if good omens appeared in visible form. A Brahmani-kite promised great blessings; and a Śyāmā bird was observed on an auspicious tree to the left. A man bearing curds and fish and two learned Brahmans each with a book in his hand came from the opposite direction. (1—4)

दो०—मंगलमय कल्यानमय अभिमत फल दातार।
जनु सब साचे होन हित भए सगुन एक बार॥ ३०३॥

All kinds of blessed and auspicious omens and those conducive of desired results occurred all at once as if to fulfil themselves. (303)

चौ०—मंगल सगुन सुगम सब ताकें। सगुन ब्रह्म सुंदर सुत जाकें॥
राम सरिस बरु दुलहिनि सीता। समधी दसरथु जनकु पुनीता॥ १॥
सुनि अस ब्याहु सगुन सब नाचे। अब कीन्हे बिरंचि हम साँचे॥
एहि बिधि कीन्ह बरात पयाना। हय गय गाजहिं हने निसाना॥ २॥
आवत जानि भानुकुल केतू। सरितन्हि जनक बँधाए सेतू॥
बीच बीच बर बास बनाए। सुरपुर सरिस संपदा छाए॥ ३॥
असन सयन बर बसन सुहाए। पावहिं सब निज निज मन भाए॥
नित नूतन सुख लखि अनुकूले। सकल बरातिन्ह मंदिर भूले॥ ४॥

Auspicious omens easily occur to him who has God with form as his own son In the marriage which was going to take place, the bridegroom was no other than Śrī Rāma and Sītā Herself was the bride; while the pious Daśaratha

and Janaka were the parents of the bridegroom and the bride respectively; hearing of this marriage all good omens danced and said, "It is now that the Creator has justified us." In this way the procession set forth amidst the neighing of horses, the trumpeting of elephants and the clash of kettledrums. Learning that the chief of the solar race, King Daśaratha, was already on the way, King Janaka had the rivers bridged, and got beautiful rest-houses erected at different stages, which vied in magnificence with the city of immortals (Amarāvatī), and in which members of the bridegroom's party were supplied with excellent food, beds and clothing each according to his own taste. Finding ever new pleasures agreeable to themselves all the members of the bridegroom's party forgot their own home. (1—4)

दो०—आवत जानि बरात बर सुनि गहगहे निसान ।
सजि गज रथ पदचर तुरग लेन चले अगवान ॥ ३०४ ॥

When it was learnt that the procession of the bridegroom's party was approaching and the tempestuous clash of the kettledrums was heard, a deputation went out to receive it with elephants, chariots, footmen and horses duly equipped. (304)

[PAUSE 10 FOR A THIRTY-DAY RECITATION]

चौ०—कनक कलस भरि कोपर थारा । भाजन ललित अनेक प्रकारा ॥
भरे सुधासम सब पकवाने । नाना भाँति न जाहिं बखाने ॥ १ ॥
फल अनेक बर बस्तु सुहाईं । हरषि भेंट हित भूप पठाईं ॥
भूषन बसन महामनि नाना । खग मृग हय गय बहुबिधि जाना ॥ २ ॥
मंगल सगुन सुगंध सुहाए । बहुत भाँति महिपाल पठाए ॥
दधि चिउरा उपहार अपारा । भरि भरि काँवरि चले कहारा ॥ ३ ॥
अगवानन्ह जब दीखि बराता । उर आनंदु पुलक भर गाता ॥
देखि बनाव सहित अगवाना । मुदित बरातिन्ह हने निसाना ॥ ४ ॥

Jars of gold full of sweet and cold drinks and trays and salvers and beautiful dishes of various kinds laden with confections of indescribable variety and delicious as ambrosia, with luscious fruit and many other delightful articles were sent as an offering by King Janaka in his joy. The king also sent ornaments, wearing apparel, valuable gems of every variety, birds, antelopes, horses, elephants, vehicles of every description, charming aromatic substances of an auspicious nature and various articles of good omen; and a train of porters marched with their loads of curds, parched rice and presents of endless variety slung across their shoulders. When the deputation saw the bridegroom's party, their mind was filled with rapture and a thrill ran through their frame. Seeing the deputation equipped in every way the members of the bridegroom's party had their drums beaten in great joy. (1—4)

दो०—हरषि परसपर मिलन हित कछुक चले बगमेल ।
जनु आनंद समुद्र दुइ मिलत बिहाइ सुबेल ॥ ३०५ ॥

A batch from each side joyfully marched at a gallop in order to meet each other and the two parties met as two oceans of bliss that had transgressed the bounds. (305)

चौ०—बरषि सुमन सुर सुंदरि गावहिं । मुदित देव दुंदुभीं बजावहिं ॥
बस्तु सकल राखीं नृप आगें । बिनय कीन्हि तिन्ह अति अनुरागें ॥ १ ॥
प्रेम समेत रायँ सबु लीन्हा । भै बकसीस जाचकन्हि दीन्हा ॥
करि पूजा मान्यता बड़ाई । जनवासे कहुँ चले लवाई ॥ २ ॥
बसन बिचित्र पाँवड़े दु धन मदु परिहरहीं ॥
अति सुंदर दीन्हेउ जनवासा । जहँ सबु कहुँ सब भाँति ॥ ३ ॥
जानी सियँ बरात पुर आई । कछु निज महिमा प्रगटि जनाई ॥
हृदयँ सुमिरि सब सिद्धि बोलाईं । भूप पहुनई करन पठाईं ॥ ४ ॥

Celestial damsels rained down flowers and sang, while the glad gods sounded kettledrums. The members of the deputation placed all the offerings before King Daśaratha and supplicated him with an affectionate address. The king lovingly accepted everything and distributed the offerings as presents among his own people, or bestowed them as alms on the beggars. After due homage, reverence and courtesy the deputation conducted the bridegroom's party to the lodgings set apart for them. Gorgeous cloths were spread as carpets for the royal guests to tread upon, on seeing which Kuvera (the god of wealth) was no longer proud of his wealth. Magnificent were the quarters assigned to the bridegroom's party, which provided every kind of comfort for each guest. When Sītā learnt that the bridegroom's party had arrived in the city, She manifested Her glory to a certain extent. By Her very thought She summoned all the Siddhis (miraculous powers personified) and despatched them to wait upon the king and his party. (1—4)

दो०—सिधि सब सिय आयसु अकनि गईं जहाँ जनवास ।
लिएँ संपदा सकल सुख सुरपुर भोग बिलास ॥ ३०६ ॥

Hearing Sītā's command they repaired to the guests' apartments, taking with them every kind of riches, comforts as well as the enjoyments and luxuries of heaven. (306)

चौ०—निज निज बास बिलोकि बराती । सुरसुख सकल सुलभ सब भाँती ॥
बिभव भेद कछु कोउ न जाना । सकल जनक कर करहिं बखाना ॥ १ ॥
सिय महिमा रघुनायक जानी । हरषे हृदयँ हेतु पहिचानी ॥
पितु आगमनु सुनत दोउ भाई । हृदयँ न अति आनंदु अमाई ॥ २ ॥
सकुचन्ह कहि न सकत गुरु पाहीं । पितु दरसन लालचु मन माहीं ॥
बिस्वामित्र बिनय बड़ि देखी । उपजा उर संतोषु बिसेषी ॥ ३ ॥
हरषि बंधु दोउ हृदयँ लगाए । पुलक अंग अंबक जल छाए ॥
चले जहाँ दसरथु जनवासे । मनहुँ सरोबर तकेउ पिआसे ॥ ४ ॥

Each member of the bridegroom's party found in his own apartment all the enjoyments of heaven ready at hand in every [illegible]. No one, however, had an inkling of the mystery behind this untold splendour; everyone sang Janaka's praises. Rāma alone recognized Sītā's influence and was glad at heart to discern Her love. When the brothers heard of their father's [illegible] they could not contain themselves for joy, but were too modest to speak to their Guru, though their heart longed to see their sire. Viśwāmitra felt much gratified at heart to perceive this great humility. In his joy he pressed the two brothers to his bosom; a thrill ran through his limbs, while tears rushed to his eyes. They proceeded to the guests' apartments, where King [Da]śaratha was, as though a lake sought [to] visit a thirsty soul. (1—4)

दो०—भूप बिलोके जबहिं मुनि आवत सुतन्ह समेत ।
उठे हरषि सुखसिंधु महुँ चले थाह सी लेत ॥ ३०७ ॥

When the king saw the sage coming [w]ith the two princes, he rose in joy and advanced to meet them like a man who feels his footing in an ocean of bliss. (307)

चौ०—मुनिहि दंडवत कीन्ह महीसा । बार बार पद रज धरि सीसा ॥
कौसिक राउ लिए उर लाई । कहि असीस पूछी कुसलाई ॥ १ ॥
पुनि दंडवत करत दोउ भाई । देखि नृपति उर सुखु न समाई ॥
सुत हियँ लाइ दुसह दुख मेटे । मृतक सरीर प्रान जनु भेंटे ॥ २ ॥
पुनि बसिष्ठ पद सिर तिन्ह नाए । प्रेम मुदित मुनिबर उर लाए ॥
बिप्र बृंद बंदे दुहुँ भाईं । मन भावती असीसें पाईं ॥ ३ ॥
भरत सहानुज कीन्ह प्रनामा । लिए उठाइ लाइ उर रामा ॥
हरषे लखन देखि दोउ भ्राता । मिले प्रेम परिपूरित गाता ॥ ४ ॥

The king prostrated himself before the sage, placing the dust [of] the latter's feet on his head again and again. Kauśika pressed the king to his bosom, blessed him and inquired after his welfare. When King Daśaratha saw the two brothers prostrating themselves, he could not contain himself for joy. Pressing the boys to his bosom he allayed the unbearable pangs of separation and looked like a dead body restored to life. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa then bowed their head at Vasiṣṭha's feet and the great sage embraced them in the ecstasy of love. The two brothers next saluted all the Brahmans and in turn received their welcome blessings. Bharata and his younger half-brother (Śatrughna) greeted Rāma, who lifted them and embraced them. Lakṣmaṇa rejoiced to see the two brothers (Bharata and Śatrughna) and as he embraced them his limbs were throbbing with emotion. (1—4)

दो०—पुरजन परिजन जातिजन जाचक मंत्री मीत ।
मिले जथाबिधि सबहि प्रभु परम कृपाल बिनीत ॥ ३०८ ॥

The most gracious and unassuming Lord greeted everyone else including the citizens, attendants, kinsmen, beggars, ministers and friends in a manner befitting the rank of each. (308)

Rama, the Bridegroom

चौ०—रामहि देखि बरात जुड़ानी । प्रीति कि रीति न जाति बखानी ॥
नृप समीप सोहहिं सुत चारी । जनु धन धरमादिक तनुधारी ॥ १ ॥
सुतन्ह समेत दसरथहि देखी । मुदित नगर नर नारि बिसेषी ॥
सुमन बरिसि सुर हनहिं निसाना । नाकनटीं नाचहिं करि गाना ॥ २ ॥
सतानंद अरु बिप्र सचिव गन । मागध सूत बिदुष बंदीजन ॥
सहित बरात राउ सनमाना । आयसु मागि फिरे अगवाना ॥ ३ ॥
प्रथम बरात लगन तें आई । तातें पुर प्रमोदु अधिकाई ॥
ब्रह्मानंदु लोग सब लहहीं । बढ़हुँ दिवस निसि बिधि सन कहहीं ॥ ४ ॥

The sight of Śrī Rāma was so soothing to the guests; the ways of love are beyond description. Beside the king his four sons looked like incarnations as it were of the four ends of human endeavour, viz., riches, religious merit etc. The people of the city were delighted beyond measure to see King Daśaratha with his sons. The gods rained down flowers and beat their drums; the nymphs of heaven danced and sang. Śatānanda (King Janaka's family preceptor) and the other Brahmans and ministers of State, as well as the genealogists, minstrels, jesters and rhapsodists, who formed the deputation, paid due honour to the king and his party and returned with their permission The bridegroom's party had arrived earlier than the day fixed for the wedding: there was great rejoicing in the city on this account. Everyone enjoyed transcendent bliss and prayed to the Creator that the days and nights might be lengthened. (1—4)

दो०—रामु सीय सोभा अवधि सुकृत अवधि दोउ राज ।
जहँ तहँ पुरजन कहहिं अस मिलि नर नारि समाज ॥ ३०९ ॥

"Rāma and Sītā are the perfection of beauty, and the two kings (Daśaratha and Janaka) the perfection of virtue!" Thus would observe the men and women of the city wherever they happened to meet. (309)

चौ०—जनक सुकृत मूरति बैदेही । दसरथ सुकृत रामु धरें देही ॥
इन्ह सम काहुँ न सिव अवराधे । काहुँ न इन्ह समान फल लाधे ॥ १ ॥
इन्ह सम कोउ न भयउ जग माहीं । है नहिं कतहूँ होनेउ नाहीं ॥
हम सब सकल सुकृत कै रासी । भए जग जनमि जनकपुर बासी ॥ २ ॥
जिन्ह जानकी राम छबि देखी । को सुकृती हम सरिस बिसेषी ॥
पुनि देखब रघुबीर बिआहू । लेब भली बिधि लोचन लाहू ॥ ३ ॥
कहहिं परसपर कोकिलबयनीं । एहि बिआहँ बड़ लाभु सुनयनीं ॥
बड़ें भाग बिधि बात बनाई । नयन अतिथि होइहहिं दोउ भाई ॥ ४ ॥

"Vaidehī (Sītā) is the incarnation of Janaka's merit, and Rāma is Daśaratha's virtue personified No one has worshipped Śiva with such devotion as these two kings, nor has anyone obtained such a reward as they have. No one has eq[illegible] them in this world, [illegible] anyone to equal them anywhere nor shall be. We are all storehouses of all kinds of merits

in that we have been born in this world as residents of Janaka's capital. Who is so highly blessed as we, who have beheld the beauty of Jānakī (Sītā) and Rāma? And we will witness Śrī Rāma's wedding and shall thereby richly reap the benefit of our eyes. Damsels with voice as sweet as the notes of the cuckoo whispered to one another, "O bright-eyed friends, we shall gain much by this union. By our great good-luck Providence has ordained things well: the two brothers shall often delight our eyes. (1—4)

दो०—बारहिं बार सनेह बस जनक बोलाउब सीय।
लेन आइहहिं बंधु दोउ कोटि काम कमनीय॥ ३१०॥

"Time after time out of affection Janaka will send for Sītā (from Ayodhyā); and the two brothers, charming as millions of Cupids put together, will come to take her back (310)

चौ०—बिबिध भाँति होइहि पहुनाई। प्रिय न काहि अस सासुर माई॥
तब तब राम लखनहि निहारी। होइहहिं सब पुर लोग सुखारी॥ १॥
सखि जस राम लखन कर जोटा। तैसेइ भूप संग दुइ ढोटा॥
स्याम गौर सब अंग सुहाए। ते सब कहहिं देखि जे आए॥ २॥
कहा एक मैं आजु निहारे। जनु बिरंचि निज हाथ सँवारे॥
भरतु रामही की अनुहारी। सहसा लखि न सकहिं नर नारी॥ ३॥
लखनु सत्रुसूदनु एकरूपा। नख सिख ते सब अंग अनूपा॥
मन भावहिं मुख बरनि न जाहीं। उपमा कहुँ त्रिभुवन कोउ नाहीं॥ ४॥

"There will be hospitality of every kind, who, dear one, would not love to stay at such a father-in-law's On each such occasion all the people of the city will be happy to behold Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. King Daśaratha, my friends, has brought with him two other lads exactly resembling the pair of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. One dark, the other fair, but both charming of every limb: so declare all those who have seen them." Said another, "I saw them today: it appeared to me as though the Creator had fashioned them with his own hands. Bharata is an exact copy of Rāma; no man or woman could distinguish them at first sight. Lakṣmaṇa and Śatrusūdana (Śatrughna) are indistinguishable from each other, peerless in every limb from head to foot. The four brothers attract the mind but cannot be described in words; for they have no match in all the three worlds. (1—4)

छं०—उपमा न कोउ कह दास तुलसी कतहुँ कबि कोबिद कहैं।
बल बिनय बिद्या सील सोभा सिंधु इन्ह से एइ अहैं॥
पुर नारि सकल पसारि अंचल बिधिहि बचन सुनावहीं।
ब्याहिअहुँ चारिउ भाइ एहिं पुर हम सुमंगल गावहीं॥

Says Tulasīdāsa: "They have no comparison anywhere, so declare the poets and wise men. Oceans of strength, modesty, learning, amiability and beauty, they are their own compeers." Spreading out the skirt of their garment (as a beggar

would while asking for alms) all the women of the city made entreaties to the Creator, "May all the four brothers be married in this city and may we sing charming nuptial songs!"

सो०—कहहिं परस्पर नारि बारि बिलोचन पुलक तन।
सखि सबु करब पुरारि पुन्य पयोनिधि भूप दोउ ॥ ३११ ॥

Said the damsels to one another, with tears in their eyes and the hair on their body standing erect, "Friends, the Slayer of the demon Tripura will accomplish everything the two kings are of such boundless merit." (311)

चौ०—एहि बिधि सकल मनोरथ करहीं। आनँद उमगि उमगि उर भरहीं ॥
जे नृप सीय स्वयंबर आए। देखि बंधु सब तिन्ह सुख पाए ॥ १ ॥
कहत राम जसु बिसद बिसाला। निज निज भवन गए महिपाला ॥
गए बीति कछु दिन एहि भाँती। प्रमुदित पुरजन सकल बराती ॥ २ ॥
मंगल मूल लगन दिनु आवा। हिम रितु अगहनु मासु सुहावा ॥
ग्रह तिथि नखतु जोगु बर बारू। लगन सोधि बिधि कीन्ह बिचारू ॥ ३ ॥
पठै दीन्हि नारद सन सोई। गनी जनक के गनकन्ह जोई ॥
सुनी सकल लोगन्ह यह बाता। कहहिं जोतिषी आहिं बिधाता ॥ ४ ॥

In this way they all prayed and a flood of joy inundated their heart. The princes who had come as Sītā's suitors rejoiced to see the four brothers and returned each to his own home extolling Śrī Rāma's widespread and spotless fame. Thus a few days elapsed to the delight alike of the citizens and all the members of the bridegroom's party. At length the blessed day of wedding arrived, it was the delightful month of Mārgaśīrṣa and the beginning of the cold season. Having carefully examined and determined the propitious nature of the planets, date, asterism, the conjunction of the stars, the day of the week and the hour of the wedding the Creator despatched the note concerning the hour of the wedding through Nārada; it was just the same that Janaka's astrologers had already determined When all the people heard of this, they observed, "The astrologers of this place are so many creators as it were." (1—4)

दो०—धेनुधूरि बेला बिमल सकल सुमंगल मूल।
बिप्रन्ह कहेउ बिदेह सन जानि सगुन अनुकूल ॥ ३१२ ॥

The most auspicious and sacred hour before sunset (which is the time when cows generally return home from pasture, and is consequently marked by clouds of dust raised by their hoofs) arrived, perceiving propitious omens, the Brahmans apprised King Videha of its approach. (312)

चौ०—उपरोहितहि कहेउ नरनाहा। अब बिलंब कर कारनु काहा ॥
सतानंद तब सचिव बोलाए। मंगल सकल साजि सब ल्याए ॥ १ ॥
संख निसान पनव बहु बाजे। मंगल कलस सगुन सुभ साजे ॥
सुभग सुआसिनि गावहिं गीता। करहिं बेद धुनि बिप्र पुनीता ॥ २ ॥

लेन चले सादर एहि भाँती । गए जहाँ जनवास बराती ॥
कोसलपति कर देखि समाजू । अति लघु लाग तिन्हहि सुरराजू ॥ ३ ॥
भयउ समउ अब धारिअ पाऊ । यह सुनि परा निसानहिं घाऊ ॥
गुरहि पूछि करि कुलबिधि राजा । चले संग मुनि साधु समाजा ॥ ४ ॥

The king asked the family priest (Śatānanda), "What is the cause of delay now ?" Śatānanda then summoned the ministers, who came equipped with all auspicious articles. A number of conches, drums and tabors sounded. Festal vases and articles of good omen (such as curds, turmeric and blades of Dūrvā grass) were displayed. Graceful women (whose husbands were alive) sang songs, and holy Brahmans murmured Vedic texts. In this manner they proceeded to invite the bridegroom's party with due honour and called at the latter's lodgings. When they witnessed King Daśaratha's glory, Indra (the lord of celestials) looked very small to them. "The hour has come; be good enough to start now," they submitted. At this the drums gave a thundering beat. After consulting his preceptor and going through the family rites King Daśaratha sallied forth with a host of sages and holy men. (1—4)

दो०—भाग्य बिभव अवधेस कर देखि देव ब्रह्मादि ।
लगे सराहन सहस मुख जानि जनम निज बादि ॥ ३१३ ॥

Witnessing King Daśaratha's good fortune and glory and believing their birth as fruitless, Brahmā and the other gods began to extol him with a thousand tongues. (313)

चौ०—सुरन्ह सुमंगल अवसरु जाना । बरषहिं सुमन बजाइ निसाना ॥
सिव ब्रह्मादिक बिबुध बरूथा । चढ़े बिमानन्हि नाना जूथा ॥ १ ॥
प्रेम पुलक तन हृदयँ उछाहू । चले बिलोकन राम बिआहू ॥
देखि जनकपुरु सुर अनुरागे । निज निज लोक सबहिं लघु लागे ॥ २ ॥
चितवहिं चकित बिचित्र बिताना । रचना सकल अलौकिक नाना ॥
नगर नारि नर रूप निधाना । सुघर सुधरम सुसील सुजाना ॥ ३ ॥
तिन्हहि देखि सब सुर सुरनारीं । भए नखत जनु बिधु उजिआरीं ॥
बिधिहि भयउ आचरजु बिसेषी । निज करनी कछु कतहुँ न देखी ॥ ४ ॥

The gods perceived that it was a fit occasion for happy rejoicings, hence they rained down flowers and beat their drums. Śiva, Brahmā and hosts of other gods mounted aerial cars in several groups. Their frames thrilling over with emotion and their hearts overflowing with joy, they proceeded to witness Śrī Rāma's wedding. The gods felt so enraptured to see Janaka's capital that their own realms appeared to them as of small account. They gazed with amazement at the wonderful pavilion and all the different works of art which were of a transcendental character. The people of the city, both men and women, were so many mines of beauty, well-formed, pious, amiable and wise. In their presence all the gods and goddesses appeared like stars

in a moonlit night. The Creator (Brahmā) was astounded above all; for nowhere did he find his own handiwork. (1—4)

दो०—सिवँ समुझाए देव सब जनि आचरज भुलाहु।
हृदयँ बिचारहु धीर धरि सिय रघुबीर बिआहु ॥ ३१४ ॥

Śiva admonished all the gods saying, "Be not lost in wonder; calmly ponder in your heart that it is the wedding of Sītā and the Hero of Raghu's race. (314)

चौ०—जिन्ह कर नामु लेत जग माहीं। सकल अमंगल मूल नसाहीं ॥
करतल होहिं पदारथ चारी। तेइ सिय रामु कहेउ कामारी ॥ १ ॥
एहि बिधि संभु सुरन्ह समुझावा। पुनि आगें बर बसह चलावा ॥
देवन्ह देखे दसरथु जाता। महामोद मन पुलकित गाता ॥ २ ॥
साधु समाज संग महिदेवा। जनु तनु धरें करहिं सुख सेवा ॥
सोहत साथ सुभग सुत चारी। जनु अपबरग सकल तनुधारी ॥ ३ ॥
मरकत कनक बरन बर जोरी। देखि सुरन्ह भै प्रीति न थोरी ॥
पुनि रामहि बिलोकि हियँ हरषे। नृपहि सराहि सुमन तिन्ह बरषे ॥ ४ ॥

"At the very mention of whose name all evil is uprooted and the four ends of human existence are brought within one's grasp, such are Sītā and Rāma," said the Destroyer of Cupid, Śankara. In this way Śambhu admonished the divinities, and then spurred on His noble bull The gods beheld Daśaratha marching (to Janaka's palace) with his heart full of rapture and the hair on his body standing erect. The assemblage of holy men and Brahmans accompanying the king appeared like joys incarnate ministering to him. By his side shone forth the four handsome princes, incarnations as it were of the four types of final beatitude.* The gods were greatly inspired with love to see the two lovely pairs, one possessing the hue of emeralds and the other of golden hue. They were particularly delighted at heart to see Rāma, and extolling the king they rained down flowers on him. (1—4)

दो०—राम रूपु नख सिख सुभग बारहिं बार निहारि।
पुलक गात लोचन सजल उमा समेत पुरारि ॥ ३१५ ॥

As Umā and the Slayer of the demon Tripura gazed again and again at Śrī Rāma's charming beauty from head to foot, the hair on Their body stood erect and Their eyes were bedewed with tears. (315)

चौ०—केकि कंठ दुति स्यामल अंगा। तड़ित बिनिंदक बसन सुरंगा ॥
ब्याह बिभूषन बिबिध बनाए। मंगल सब सब भाँति सुहाए ॥ १ ॥

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* The four types of final beatitude as enumerated in the scriptures are as follows:—(1) Sālokya (residence in the same heaven as the Supreme Deity), (2) Sārūpya (attaining a form similar to that of the Deity), (3) Sāmīpya (living in close proximity with the Deity), and (4) Sāyujya (complete absorption into the Deity).

सरद बिमल बिधु बदनु सुहावन। नयन नवल राजीव लजावन॥
सकल अलौकिक सुंदरताई। कहि न जाइ मनही मन भाई॥ २॥
बंधु मनोहर सोहहिं संगा। जात नचावत चपल तुरंगा॥
राजकुअँर बर बाजि देखावहिं। बंस प्रसंसक बिरिद सुनावहिं॥ ३॥
जेहि तुरंग पर रामु बिराजे। गति बिलोकि खगनायकु लाजे॥
कहि न जाइ सब भाँति सुहावा। बाजि बेषु जनु काम बनावा॥ ४॥

His swarthy form possessed the glow of a peacock's neck, while His bright yellow raiment outshone the lightning. Wedding ornaments of every kind, all auspicious and graceful in every way, adorned His person. His countenance was as delightful as the moon in a cloudless autumnal night; while His eyes put to shame a blooming pair of lotuses. The elegance of His form was transcendent in all its details; though captivating the soul, it defied description Beside Him shone forth His lovely brothers, who rode curveting their restive steed. The other princes too displayed the pace of their horses and the family bards recited the glories of their line Even the king of birds, Garuḍa, blushed for shame to note the speed of the steed that Rāma bestrode; it was charming beyond description in every way; it seemed as though Cupid himself had taken the form of a horse. (1—4)

छं०—जनु बाजि बेषु बनाइ मनसिजु राम हित अति सोहई।
आपनें बय बल रूप गुन गति सकल भुवन बिमोहई॥
जगमगत जीनु जराव जोति सुमोति मनि मानिक लगे।
किंकिनि ललाम लगामु ललित बिलोकि सुर नर मुनि ठगे॥

It seemed as if Cupid himself had appeared with all his charm in the disguise of a horse for the sake of Śrī Rāma and fascinated the whole universe with its youth and vigour, form and virtues as well as with its pace. A bejewelled saddle, thick set with beautiful pearls, gems and rubies shone on his back; the exquisite band with small tinkling bells and the lovely bridle, dazed gods, men and sages alike.

दो०—प्रभु मनसहिं लयलीन मनु चलत बाजि छबि पाव।
भूषित उड़गन तड़ित घनु जनु बर बरहि नचाव॥ ३१६॥

Marching with its mind completely merged in the Lord's will, the horse looked most beautiful, as though a cloud irradiated by stars and the fitful lightning had mounted a peacock and made it dance. (316)

चौ०—जेहिं बर बाजि रामु असवारा। तेहि सारदउ न बरनै पारा॥
संकरु राम रूप अनुरागे। नयन पंचदस अति प्रिय लागे॥ १॥
हरि हित सहित रामु जब जोहे। रमा समेत रमापति मोहे॥
निरखि राम छबि बिधि हरषाने। आठइ नयन जानि पछिताने॥ २॥

सुर सेनप उर बहुत उछाहू । बिधि ते डेवढ़ लोचन लाहू ॥
रामहि चितव सुरेस सुजाना । गौतम श्रापु परम हित माना ॥ ३ ॥
देव सकल सुरपतिहि सिहाहीं । आजु पुरंदर सम कोउ नाहीं ॥
मुदित देवगन रामहि देखी । नृपसमाज दुहुँ हरषु बिसेषी ॥ ४ ॥

Even Śāradā is unable to describe the noble steed on which Śrī Rāma rode. Śankara (who has five faces, with three eyes each) was enamoured of Śrī Rāma's beauty and congratulated himself on His possessing as many as fifteen eyes When Śrī Hari (Viṣṇu) fondly gazed on Rāma, both Ramā and Her lord were equally enchanted. (The four-faced) Brahmā too was delighted to behold Śrī Rāma's beauty; but he felt sorry to think that he had only eight eyes. The generalissimo of the heavenly host (the six-faced Kārtikeya) exulted over the fact of his possessing half as many eyes again as Brahmā. When the wise lord of celestials gazed on Śrī Rāma (with his thousand eyes), he thought Gotama's curse as the greatest blessing. All the gods envied Indra and observed, "No one can vie with Purandara (Indra) today." The whole host of heavenly beings rejoiced to behold Śrī Rāma and there was joy beyond measure in the court of both the monarchs. (1—4)

छं०—अति हरषु राजसमाज दुहु दिसि दुंदुभीं बाजहिं घनी ।
बरषहिं सुमन सुर हरषि कहि जय जयति जय रघुकुलमनी ॥
एहि भाँति जानि बरात आवत बाजने बहु बाजहीं ।
रानी सुआसिनि बोलि परिछनि हेतु मंगल साजहीं ॥

There was great rejoicing in the court of both the kings and a tempestuous clash of kettledrums on both sides, the gods rained down flowers, shouting in their joy, "Glory, glory, glory to the Jewel of Raghu's race !" In this way when it was known that the marriage procession was approaching, all sorts of music began to play, while Queen Sunayanā (Sītā's mother) summoned married women whose husbands were alive and prepared with their help auspicious materials for the ceremony of waving lights round the bridegroom.

दो०—सजि आरती अनेक बिधि मंगल सकल सँवारि ।
चलीं मुदित परिछनि करन गजगामिनि बर नारि ॥ ३१७ ॥

Kindling lights of various kinds and collecting all other articles of good omen, a bevy of graceful women, who possessed the charming gait of an elephant, proceeded joyfully to perform the ceremony of waving lights round the bridegroom. (317)

चौ०—बिधुबदनीं सब सब मृगलोचनि । सब निज तन छबि रति मदु मोचनि ॥
पहिरें बरन बरन बर चीरा । सकल बिभूषन सजें सरीरा ॥ १ ॥
सकल सुमंगल अंग बनाएँ । करहिं गान कलकंठि लजाएँ ॥
कंकन किंकिनि नूपुर बाजहिं । चालि बिलोकि काम गज लाजहिं ॥ २ ॥

बाजहिं बाजने बिबिध प्रकारा । नभ अरु नगर सुमंगलचारा ॥
सची सारदा रमा भवानी । जे सुरतिय सुचि सहज सयानी ॥ ३ ॥
कपट नारि बर बेष बनाई । मिलीं सकल रनिवासहिं जाई ॥
करहिं गान कल मंगल बानीं । हरष बिबस सब काहुँ न जानीं ॥ ४ ॥

They all had moon-like faces, and eyes like those of a gazelle; by the elegance of their form they robbed Rati (Love's consort) of all self-conceit. Attired in costly garments of various colours they had adorned their person with all kinds of ornaments. They had further beautified all their limbs with auspicious materials, and sang melodies that put to shame even a female cuckoo Bracelets, small bells round their waist-band as well as anklets made a jingling sound as they moved and even Love's elephants blushed for shame to see their gait. All kinds of music played and there were rejoicings both in the heavens and in the city. Śachī (Indra's consort), Śāradā, Ramā, Bhavānī and other goddesses, who were pure-hearted and clever by nature, assumed the disguise of lovely women and joined the royal gynaeceum. They sang festal songs in a melodious voice, and as every one was overcome with joy no one could recognize them. (1—4)

छं०—को जान केहि आनंद बस सब ब्रह्मु बर परिछन चली ।
कल गान मधुर निसान बरषहिं सुमन सुर सोभा भली ॥
आनंदकंदु बिलोकि दूलहु सकल हियँ हरषित भई ।
अंभोज अंबक अंबु उमगि सुअंग पुलकावलि छई ॥

Who should recognize whom, when everyone in the gynaeceum proceeded in her ecstatic joy to join the ceremony of waving lights round the bridegroom, who was no other than the Supreme Spirit incarnate. Melodious songs were being sung and kettledrums gently sounded, the gods rained down flowers and everything looked most charming. All the women were delighted at heart to behold the bridegroom, who was the fountain of joy, tears of love rushed to their lotus-like eyes and the hair on their pretty limbs stood erect.

दो०—जो सुखु भा सिय मातु मन देखि राम बर बेषु ।
सो न सकहिं कहि कलप सत सहस सारदा सेषु ॥ ३१८ ॥

The joy which Sītā's mother felt in her heart on beholding Śrī Rāma in the attire of a bridegroom was more than a thousand Śāradās and Śeṣas could tell in a hundred Kalpas. (318)

चौ०—नयन नीरु हटि मंगल जानी । परिछनि करहिं मुदित मन रानी ॥
बेद बिहित अरु कुल आचारू । कीन्ह भली बिधि सब ब्यवहारू ॥ १ ॥
पंच सबद धुनि मंगल गाना । पट पाँवड़े परहिं बिधि नाना ॥
करि आरती अरघु तिन्ह दीन्हा । राम गमनु मंडप तब कीन्हा ॥ २ ॥
दसरथु सहित समाज बिराजे । बिभव बिलोकि लोकपति लाजे ॥
समयँ समयँ सुर बरषहिं फूला । सांति पढ़हिं महिसुर अनुकूला ॥ ३ ॥

नभ अरु नगर कोलाहल होई । आपनि पर कछु सुनइ न कोई ॥
एहि बिधि रामु मंडपहिं आए । अरघु देइ आसन बैठाए ॥ ४ ॥

Restraining her tears out of regard for the auspicious occasion, Queen Sunayanā performed the ceremony of waving lights with a gladdened heart, and duly completed all the rites prescribed by the Vedas as well as by family usage. The five kinds of music* were being played, accompanied by five varieties of other sounds† and festal songs; carpets of different sorts were spread on the way After waving lights the queen offered water to Śrī Rāma for washing His hands with and the latter then proceeded to the pavilion Daśaratha shone in all his glory with his followers, his magnificence put to shame the guardians of the different worlds. From time to time the gods rained down flowers, and the Brahmans recited propitiatory texts appropriate to the occasion. There was such a great uproar in the heavens as well as in the city that no one could hear one's own words, much less of others In this way Śrī Rāma entered the pavilion, after offering Him water to wash His hands with, He was conducted to His seat (1—4)

छं०—बैठारि आसन आरती करि निरखि बरु सुखु पावहीं ।
मनि बसन भूषन भूरि वारहिं नारि मंगल गावहीं ॥
ब्रह्मादि सुरबर बिप्र बेष बनाइ कौतुक देखहीं ।
अवलोकि रघु कुल कमल रबि छबि सुफल जीवन लेखहीं ॥

When Rāma was installed on the seat reserved for Him, lights were waved round Him and everyone rejoiced to behold the bridegroom, scattering about Him gems and raiments and ornaments in profusion, while women sang festal songs. Brahmā and the other great gods witnessed the spectacle disguised as Brahmans; and as they gazed on the beauty of Śrī Rāma, who delighted Raghu's race even as the sun brings joy to the lotuses, they regarded this privilege as the fulfilment of their life.

दो०—नाऊ बारी भाट नट राम निछावरि पाइ ।
मुदित असीसहिं नाइ सिर हरषु न हृदयँ समाइ ॥ ३१९ ॥

Having gathered the offerings scattered about Śrī Rāma, the barbers, torch-bearers, family bards and dancers bowed their head and gladly invoked blessings on Him with a heart overflowing with joy. (319)

चौ०—मिले जनकु दसरथु अति प्रीतीं । करि बैदिक लौकिक सब रीतीं ॥
मिलत महा दोउ राज बिराजे । उपमा खोजि खोजि कबि लाजे ॥ १ ॥

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* The five kinds of music referred to above are those produced from:—(1) Vīṇā or the lute, (2) the clapping of hands, (3) the clashing of a pair of cymbals, (4) the beating of a kettledrum and (5) the blowing of a trumpet or any other wind instrument.

† The five varieties of other sounds are: (1) Vedadhwani (the murmuring of Vedic texts), (2) Vandidhwani (the praises sung by family bards), (3) Jayadhwani (shouts of victory), (4) Śankhadhwani (the blast of conches), and (5) Dundubhidhwani (beat of drums).

लहा न कतहुँ हारि हियँ मानी । इन्ह सम एइ उपमा उर आनी ॥
सामध देखि देव अनुरागे । सुमन बरषि जसु गावन लागे ॥ २ ॥
जगु बिरंचि उपजावा जब तें । देखे सुने ब्याह बहु तब तें ॥
सकल भाँति सम साजु समाजू । सम समधी देखे हम आजू ॥ ३ ॥
देव गिरा सुनि सुंदर साँची । प्रीति अलौकिक दुहुँ दिसि माची ॥
देत पाँवड़े अरघु सुहाए । सादर जनकु मंडपहिं ल्याए ॥ ४ ॥

Having observed every custom that derived its authority from the Vedas or from popular tradition the two kings Janaka and Daśaratha, embraced each other with great love. The two monarchs while embracing each other presented a glorious spectacle, poets made repeated efforts to find a suitable analogy but felt abashed at their failure Finding no comparison anywhere, they felt baffled and concluded that the pair could be likened to themselves alone. The gods were enraptured to see the tie of love between the two kings united by marriage alliance; raining down flowers they began to sing the glories of both. "Ever since Brahmā created the world, we have witnessed and heard of many a marriage; but it is only today that we have seen the pomp and grandeur on both sides so well-balanced in every respect and the fathers of the bride and the bridegroom so well-matched." Hearing the above voice from heaven, which was so charming yet so true, there was a flood of transcendent love on both sides. Unrolling beautiful carpets on the way and offering water to wash his hands with, Janaka himself conducted Daśaratha to the pavilion with all honour.

(1—4)

छं०—मंडपु बिलोकि बिचित्र रचनाँ रुचिरताँ मुनि मन हरे ।
निज पानि जनक सुजान सब कहुँ आनि सिंघासन धरे ॥
कुल इष्ट सरिस बसिष्ट पूजे बिनय करि आसिष लही ।
कौसिकहि पूजत परम प्रीति कि रीति तौ न परै कही ॥

The marvellous art of the pavilion and its charm captivated the heart even of sages, yet the wise Janaka fetched and placed with his own hands thrones for all the honoured guests. He worshipped the sage Vasiṣṭha as if he were his own family deity and supplicating before him received his blessings; while the supreme devotion with which he paid his homage to Kauśika was something too great for words.

दो०—बामदेव आदिक रिषय पूजे मुदित महीस ।
दिए दिब्य आसन सबहि सब सन लही असीस ॥ ३२० ॥

King Janaka gladly adored Vāmadeva (another family preceptor of King Daśaratha) and the other Ṛṣis as well, he gave them all gorgeous seats and received blessings from all of them in return. (320)

चौ०—बहुरि कीन्हि कोसलपति पूजा । जानि ईस सम भाउ न दूजा ॥
कीन्हि जोरि कर बिनय बड़ाई । कहि निज भाग्य बिभव बहुताई ॥ १ ॥

पूजे भूपति सकल बराती । समधी सम सादर सब भाँती ॥
आसन उचित दिए सब काहू । कहौं काह मुख एक उछाहू ॥ २ ॥
सकल बरात जनक सनमानी । दान मान बिनती बर बानी ॥
बिधि हरि हरु दिसिपति दिनराऊ । जे जानहिं रघुबीर प्रभाऊ ॥ ३ ॥
कपट बिप्र बर बेष बनाएँ । कौतुक देखहिं अति सचु पाएँ ॥
पूजे जनक देव सम जानें । दिए सुआसन बिनु पहिचानें ॥ ४ ॥

Again he paid divine honours to the King of Ayodhyā, taking him to be the peer of Śiva and none other, and mentioning how his fortune and rank had been enhanced through relation with King Daśaratha, he made humble supplication to the latter and extolled him with joined palms King Janaka worshipped all the members of the bridegroom's party with the same honour in every respect as he had paid to the bridegroom's father, and assigned appropriate seats to them all. How am I to describe with my one tongue the warmth of his feeling ? Janaka honoured the whole bridegroom's party with gifts, polite behaviour, supplication and sweet words Brahmā, Hari, Hara, the guardians of the eight quarters of the world* and the sun-god, all of whom had knowledge of Śrī Rāma's glory, disguised themselves as noble Brahmans and witnessed the spectacle with great delight Janaka worshipped them as on a par with gods and, though he recognized them not, assigned them exalted seats.

(1—4)

छं०—पहिचान को केहि जान सबहि अपान सुधि भोरी भई ।
आनंद कंदु बिलोकि दूलहु उभय दिसि आनँदमई ॥
सुर लखे राम सुजान पूजे मानसिक आसन दए ।
अवलोकि सीलु सुभाउ प्रभु को बिबुध मन प्रमुदित भए ॥

Who should recognize and whom should one know, when everyone had forgotten one's own self ? As they gazed on the bridegroom, who was Bliss personified, joy was diffused on both sides (in the bridegroom's party as well as in the court of Janaka). The all-wise Rāma recognized the gods, worshipped them mentally and assigned them seats of His own fancy. And the immortals were delighted at heart to perceive the congenial manners and gentle disposition of the Lord.

दो०—रामचंद्र मुख चंद्र छबि लोचन चारु चकोर ।
करत पान सादर सकल प्रेमु प्रमोदु न थोर ॥ ३२१ ॥

The graceful eyes of all fondly drank in the beauty of Śrī Rāmachandra's countenance with the utmost love and rapture even as the Chakora bird feeds on the moon's rays. (321)

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*The guardians of the eight quarters of the world are: (1) Indra (the lord of celestials), of the east; (2) Agni (fire-god), of the south-east, (3) Yama (the god dispensing the fruit of one's good or evil actions), of the south; (4) Nirṛti (the god of death), of the south-west; (5) Varuṇa (the god of water), of the west; (5) Vāyu (the wind-god), of the north-west, (7) Kuvera (the god of riches), of the north; and (8) Īśāna (Śiva), of the north-east.

चौ०—समउ बिलोकि बसिष्ठ बोलाए । सादर सतानंदु सुनि आए ॥
बेगि कुअँरि अब आनहु जाई । चले मुदित मुनि आयसु पाई ॥ १ ॥
रानी सुनि उपरोहित बानी । प्रमुदित सखिन्ह समेत सयानी ॥
बिप्र बधू कुलबृद्ध बोलाईं । करि कुल रीति सुमंगल गाईं ॥ २ ॥
नारि बेष जे सुर बर बामा । सकल सुभायँ सुंदरी स्यामा ॥
तिन्हहि देखि सुखु पावहिं नारीं । बिनु पहिचानि प्रानहु ते प्यारीं ॥ ३ ॥
बार बार सनमानहिं रानी । उमा रमा सारद सम जानी ॥
सीय सँवारि समाजु बनाई । मुदित मंडपहिं चलीं लवाई ॥ ४ ॥

Perceiving that the time of wedding had arrived, Vasiṣṭha sent for Śatānanda with all the honour due to him, and on hearing the call the latter came with all reverence. "Kindly go and bring the bride quickly now." Receiving the sage's order he gladly left. The wise queen with her associates was highly pleased to hear the priest's message; she sent for a few Brahman ladies and the elder ladies of the family, who performed the family rites and sang charming festal songs. The consorts of the principal gods, who were disguised as mortal women, were all naturally lovely and in the prime of their youth. The ladies of Janaka's household were delighted to see them and, even though none recognized them, the ladies held them dearer than their life. The queen honoured them again and again treating them on a par with Umā, Ramā and Śāradā. After adorning Sītā and forming a circle about Her they joyously conducted Her to the pavilion. (1—4)

छं०—चलि ल्याइ सीतहि सखीं सादर सजि सुमंगल भामिनीं ।
नवसप्त साजें सुंदरीं सब मत्त कुंजर गामिनीं ॥
कल गान सुनि मुनि ध्यान त्यागहिं काम कोकिल लाजहीं ।
मंजीर नूपुर कलित कंकन ताल गति बर बाजहीं ॥

Equipping themselves with auspicious materials Sītā's companions and other ladies conducted Her to the pavilion with due honour; each of them was lovely of form and had practised all the sixteen forms of adornment and moved with the grace of an elephant in rut. At the sound of their melodious strains the sages felt obliged to give up their meditation, and Love's own cuckoos were abashed. Their ornaments for the toes and ankles and the charming bangles on their wrists produced a delightful sound keeping tune with their songs.

दो०—सोहति बनिता बृंद महुँ सहज सुहावनि सीय ।
छबि ललना गन मध्य जनु सुषमा तिय कमनीय ॥ ३२२ ॥

Sītā in Her native loveliness shone forth among the bevy of ladies as a charming personification of Beauty in the midst of the Graces. (322)

चौ०—सिय सुंदरता बरनि न जाई । लघु मति बहुत मनोहरताई ॥
आवत दीखि बरातिन्ह सीता । रूप रासि सब भाँति पुनीता ॥ १ ॥

सबहि मनहिं मन किए प्रनामा । देखि राम भए पूरनकामा ॥
हरषे दसरथ सुतन्ह समेता । कहि न जाइ उर आनँदु जेता ॥ २ ॥
सुर प्रनामु करि बरिसहिं फूला । मुनि असीस धुनि मंगल मूला ॥
गान निसान कोलाहलु भारी । प्रेम प्रमोद मगन नर नारी ॥ ३ ॥
एहि बिधि सीय मंडपहिं आई । प्रमुदित सांति पढ़हिं मुनिराई ॥
तेहि अवसर कर बिधि ब्यवहारू । दुहुँ कुलगुर सब कीन्ह अचारू ॥ ४ ॥

Sītā's elegant form baffles all description: so poor is my wit and so surpassing Her charm When the members of the bridegroom's party saw Sītā approach, a veritable storehouse of beauty and spotless in every way, all greeted Her from the core of their heart. At the sight of Jānakī Rāma had His heart's desire fulfilled. King Daśaratha with all his other sons was filled with delight; the joy of their heart could not be expressed. The gods made obeisance and rained down flowers; while the sages uttered their benedictions, which were the source of all blessings The songs that the ladies sang, combined with the sound of kettledrums, produced a loud symphony; men and women both were lost in love and rejoicing In this manner Sītā entered the pavilion, while great sages recited propitiatory texts in great joy. The two family preceptors (Vasiṣṭha and Śatānanda) performed all the religious rites and ceremonies and observed the family customs. (1—4)

छं०—आचारु करि गुर गौरि गनपति मुदित बिप्र पुजावहीं ।
सुर प्रगटि पूजा लेहिं देहिं असीस अति सुखु पावहीं ॥
मधुपर्क मंगल द्रब्य जो जेहि समय मुनि मन महुँ चहैं ।
भरे कनक कोपर कलस सो तब लिएहिं परिचारक रहैं ॥ १ ॥
कुल रीति प्रीति समेत रबि कहि देत सबु सादर कियो ।
एहि भाँति देव पुजाइ सीतहि सुभग सिंघासनु दियो ॥
सिय राम अवलोकनि परसपर प्रेमु काहु न लखि परै ।
मन बुद्धि वर बानी अगोचर प्रगट कबि कैसें करै ॥ २ ॥

Having observed the family customs the Gurus (Vasiṣṭha and Śatānanda) in great joy directed the Brahmans to worship Goddess Gaurī and Her son Ganeśa, the gods accepted the homage in visible form and gave their blessing with great delight. Whatever auspicious article such as a mixture of honey* etc. the sages mentally sought at any particular moment, attendants stood ever ready with gold trays and pitchers full of that substance The sun-god himself lovingly pointed out the family usages, which were all scrupulously observed. Having thus caused Sītā to worship the gods, the sages assigned Her a beautiful throne. The mutual love

* The mixture referred to above, which is known by the name of 'Madhuparka' is usually composed of curds, clarified butter, water, honey and sugar. It is a respectful offering made to a guest or to the bridegroom on his arrival at the door of the bride's father.

with which Sītā and Rāma regarded each other could not be perceived by anyone. It was beyond the reach of the best mind, intellect and speech; how, then, could the poet express it ? (1–2)

दो०—होम समय तनु धरि अनलु अति सुख आहुति लेहिं ।
विप्र बेष धरि बेद सब कहि बिवाह बिधि देहिं ॥ ३२३ ॥

While oblations were offered to the sacred fire, the fire-god in person accepted the offerings with great delight; and the Vedas in the guise of Brahmans directed the procedure of the nuptial ceremony. (323)

चौ०—जनक पाटमहिषी जग जानी । सीय मातु किमि जाइ बखानी ॥
सुजसु सुकृत सुख सुंदरताई । सब समेटि बिधि रची बनाई ॥ १ ॥
समउ जानि मुनिबरन्ह बोलाईं । सुनत सुआसिनि सादर ल्याईं ॥
जनक बाम दिसि सोह सुनयना । हिमगिरि संग बनी जनु मयना ॥ २ ॥
कनक कलस मनि कोपर रूरे । सुचि सुगंध मंगल जल पूरे ॥
निज कर मुदित रायँ अरु रानी । धरे राम के आगें आनी ॥ ३ ॥
पढ़हिं बेद मुनि मंगल बानी । गगन सुमन झरि अवसरु जानी ॥
बरु बिलोकि दंपति अनुरागे । पाय पुनीत पखारन लागे ॥ ४ ॥

What words can describe the world-renowned queen-consort of Janaka and Sītā's mother ? The Creator had exhausted in fashioning her all the bright glory, virtue, joy and beauty Perceiving the appropriate time, the great sages sent for her; and in response to their call married women whose husbands were alive brought her with due honour. Queen Sunayanā shone forth to Janaka's left even as Menā beside Himavān (the mountain-king). The king and queen joyfully brought and placed with their own hands gold vases and beautiful trays of jewels filled with holy, scented and auspicious water before Śrī Rāma The sages recited the Veda in joyous tones and at the proper time flowers rained down from the heavens. The royal couple were enraptured to behold the Bridegroom and began to wash His holy feet.

(1–4)

छं०—लागे पखारन पाय पंकज प्रेम तन पुलकावली ।
नभ नगर गान निसान जय धुनि उमगि जनु चहुँ दिसि चली ॥
जे पद सरोज मनोज अरि उर सर सदैव बिराजहीं ।
जे सकृत सुमिरत बिमलता मन सकल कलि मल भाजहीं ॥ १ ॥
जे परसि मुनिबनिता लही गति रही जो पातकमई ।
मकरंदु जिन्ह को संभु सिर सुचिता अवधि सुर बरनई ॥
करि मधुप मन मुनि जोगि जन जे सेइ अभिमत गति लहैं ।
ते पद पखारत भाग्यभाजनु जनकु जय जय सब कहैं ॥ २ ॥

बर कुअँरि करतल जोरि साखोचारु दोउ कुलगुर करैं ।
भयो पानिगहनु बिलोकि बिधि सुर मनुज मुनि आनँद भरैं ॥
सुखमूल दूलहु देखि दंपति पुलक तन हुलस्यो हियो ।
करि लोक बेद बिधानु कन्यादानु नृपभूषन कियो ॥ ३ ॥
हिमवंत जिमि गिरिजा महेसहि हरिहि श्री सागर दई ।
तिमि जनक रामहि सिय समरपी बिस्व कल कीरति नई ॥
क्यों करै बिनय बिदेहु कियो बिदेहु मूरति सावँरीं ।
करि होमु बिधिवत गाँठि जोरी होन लागीं भावँरीं ॥ ४ ॥

They began to lave Śrī Rāma's lotus feet, their whole frame was thrilled with emotion. The sounds of singing and kettledrums and shouts of victory in the heavens as well as in the city overflowed as it were in all direction. The lotus feet that ever sparkle in the lake of Śiva's bosom, by thinking of which even for once the mind gets purified and all the impurities of the Kali age are driven away, by whose touch the sage Gotama's wife, who was full of sin, attained salvation, whose nectar in the form of the river Gaṅgā adorns Śambhu's head and is declared by the gods as the holiest of the holy, and by resorting to which with their bee-like minds sages and mystics attain the goal of their liking, it is those very feet that the most lucky Janaka washed amidst shouts of victory from all corners. Joining the palms of the Bride and the Bridegroom, both the family priests recited the genealogy of the two families; and perceiving that the Bridegroom had accepted the Bride's hand, Brahmā and the other divinities as well as men and sages were filled with delight. As the king and queen gazed on the Bridegroom, who was the very fountain of joy, the hair on their body stood erect, while their heart was filled with rapture. And having gone through all the rites sanctioned either by the Vedas or by family usage, the glorious King Janaka gave his Daughter to the Bridegroom. As Himavān gave away Girijā to the great Lord Śiva, and the deity presiding over seas bestowed Śrī on Hari, so did Janaka give Sītā to Rāma and thereby earned fair renown of an unprecedented character. King Videha (Janaka) was unable to make any supplication, since that Prince (Śrī Rāma) of swarthy complexion had justified his name (Videha) by making him forget everything about his body. When oblations had been offered to the sacred fire with due rite, the ends of garments of the Bride and the Bridegroom were tied together (as a token of their indissoluble union) and the couple began to circumambulate the fire (in order to show that the two had been united in the presence of the fire-god as a witness). (1—4)

दो०—जय धुनि बंदी बेद धुनि मंगल गान निसान ।
सुनि हरषहिं बरषहिं बिबुध सुरतरु सुमन सुजान ॥ ३२४ ॥

At the sound of the huzzas, the praises sung by the bards, the recitation of the Vedic texts, the din of the festal songs and the beating of kettledrums the wise immortals rejoiced and rained down flowers from the trees of paradise. (324)

चौ०—कुअँरु कुअँरि कल भावँरि देहीं । नयन लाभु सब सादर लेहीं ॥
जाइ न बरनि मनोहर जोरी । जो उपमा कछु कहौं सो थोरी ॥ १ ॥

राम सीय सुंदर प्रतिछाहीं । जगमगात मनि खंभन माहीं ॥
मनहुँ मदन रति धरि बहु रूपा । देखत राम बिआहु अनूपा ॥ २ ॥
दरस लालसा सकुच न थोरी । प्रगटत दुरत बहोरि बहोरी ॥
भए मगन सब देखनिहारे । जनक समान अपान बिसारे ॥ ३ ॥
प्रमुदित मुनिन्ह भावँरीं फेरीं । नेगसहित सब रीति निबेरीं ॥
राम सीय सिर सेंदुर देहीं । सोभा कहि न जाति बिधि केहीं ॥ ४ ॥
अरुन पराग जलजु भरि नीकें । ससिहि भूष अहि लोभ अमी कें ॥
बहुरि बसिष्ठ दीन्हि अनुसासन । बरु दुलहिनि बैठे एक आसन ॥ ५ ॥

The Bride and Bridegroom performed the circumambulation with charming paces, while all present feasted their admiring gaze on the spectacle The lovely couple was beyond description; whatever comparison might be suggested would fall short of the reality. Lovely images of Rāma and Sītā were reflected on the pillars of jewels and shone as if Love and his consort, Rati, witnessed Śrī Rāma's matchless wedding appearing in numerous forms Their curiosity and bashfulness were equally great, that is why they revealed themselves and went out of sight again and again. All the spectators were enraptured; like Janaka they forgot all about themselves. Joyously the sages bade the Bride and Bridegroom pace round the fire and accomplished all the rites including the ceremonial gifts. Śrī Rāma applied the vermilion to Sītā's forehead, a sight the charm of which was altogether beyond description. It seemed as if with a lotus surcharged with reddish pollen a serpent thirsting for nectar decorated the moon. Then Vasiṣṭha gave the direction and the Bride and Bridegroom sat together on the same seat.

(1—5)

छं०—बैठे बरासन रामु जानकि मुदित मन दसरथु भए ।
तनु पुलक पुनि पुनि देखि अपनें सुकृत सुरतरु फल नए ॥
भरि भुवन रहा उछाहु राम बिबाहु भा सबहीं कहा ।
केहि भाँति बरनि सिरात रसना एक यहु मंगलु महा ॥ १ ॥
तब जनक पाइ बसिष्ठ आयसु ब्याह साज सँवारि कै ।
मांडवी श्रुतकीरति उरमिला कुअँरि लईं हँकारि कै ॥
कुसकेतु कन्या प्रथम जो गुन सील सुख सोभामई ।
सब रीति प्रीति समेत करि सो ब्याहि नृप भरतहि दई ॥ २ ॥
जानकी लघु भगिनी सकल सुंदरि सिरोमनि जानि कै ।
सो तनय दीन्ही ब्याहि लखनहि सकल बिधि सनमानि कै ॥
जेहि नामु श्रुतकीरति सुलोचनि सुमुखि सब गुन आगरी ।
सो दई रिपुसूदनहि भूपति रूप सील उजागरी ॥ ३ ॥

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Bharata-Savitri.

(The Essence of the Mahabharata)

मातापितृसहस्राणि पुत्रदारशतानि च ।
संसारेष्वनुभूतानि यान्ति यास्यन्ति चापरे ॥ १ ॥

We have had, and taken leave of, thousands of mothers and fathers, and hundreds of sons and wives during the many rounds of births that we have undergone, and shall take leave of many more in future births.

हर्षस्थानसहस्राणि भयस्थानशतानि च ।
दिवसे दिवसे मूढमाविशन्ति न पण्डितम् ॥ २ ॥

There are thousands of occasions for joy and hundreds of occasions for fear. These affect, every day, only him that is ignorant, but never him that is wise.

ऊर्ध्वबाहुर्विरौम्येष न च कश्चिच्छृणोति मे ।
धर्मादर्थश्च कामश्च स किमर्थं न सेव्यते ॥ ३ ॥

With uplifted arms I am crying aloud, but nobody hears me. From Righteousness (*Dharma*) is Wealth as also Pleasure. Why should not Righteousness, therefore, be resorted to ?

न जातु कामान्न भयान्न लोभाद्
धर्मं त्यजेज्जीवितस्यापि हेतोः ।
धर्मो नित्यः सुखदुःखे त्वनित्ये
जीवो नित्यो हेतुरस्य त्वनित्यः ॥ ४ ॥

Neither for the sake of pleasure, nor through fear or cupidity, nor even for the sake of one's life, should one cast off Righteousness. Righteousness is eternal. Pleasure and pain are evanescent The *jiva* is eternal. The cause, however, of his being invested with a body is not eternal.

इमां भारतसावित्रीं प्रातरुत्थाय यः पठेत् ।
स भारतफलं प्राप्य परं ब्रह्माधिगच्छति ॥ ५ ॥

That man who, waking up at dawn, reads this *Sāvitri* of the *Bhārata*, acquires all the rewards attached to a recitation of the whole epic and mately attains to the supreme *Brahma*.

(*Mahābhārata*)

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Number of Cantos

39. Sent away by Daśaratha, Sumantra gets a chariot ready to take Śrī Rāma and his party to the forest and Sītā adorns herself with jewels brought by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Kausalyā tenders opportune advice to her daughter-in-law and the latter bows to it. Śrī Rāma comforts Kausalyā and offers apology to his other mothers, who burst into a wail. 385

40. Going clockwise round Daśaratha (as a token of respect), Sītā, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa greet him. Accompanied by Sītā, Śrī Rāma salutes Kausalyā. Lakṣmaṇa too hails Kausalyā first and then his own mother, Sumitrā. Sumitrā for her part tenders salutary advice to her son. The princes and the princess having mounted the chariot, Sumantra flicks the horses. The citizens that had assembled closely follow the chariot; but unable to keep pace with its swift movement, they return desolate. Daśaratha too runs after the chariot along with Kausalyā and others, but being unable to walk begins to totter and stops short on the road yielding to the remonstrances of his wise ministers. 389

41. The ladies of the royal gynaeceum bewail the exile of Śrī Rāma and others and the citizens of Ayodhyā too are reduced to a miserable plight. 394

42. Śrī Rāma having departed for the forest in an exceptionally swift-going chariot, Daśaratha vainly seeks to cover the intervening distance on foot. The very dust raised by the chariot having disappeared after a while, the emperor feels doubly disconsolate and drops to the ground. When Kaikeyī comes forward to support him he scolds her and asks her not to touch his person. Kausalyā then lifts him up and persuades him to

return. His personal attendants take him to the latter's apartments and, seeing him plunged in grief, Kausalyā seats herself beside him and begins to lament in various ways. 396

43. The Lament of Kausalyā. 399

44. Establishing the greatness of Śrī Rāma, Sumitrā, who is a past master in eloquence, assuages Kausalyā's grief. 401

45. When the citizens that followed Śrī Rāma in his journey to the forest refuse to return even when requested by Śrī Rāma in many ways, unable as they were to bear separation from him, Śrī Rāma with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa gets down from his chariot and begins to walk. The citizens try to deflect him from his course and persuade him to return, but in vain. At the close of the day they all reach the bank of the Tamasā. 404

46. Having reached the bank of the Tamasā and thinking of the plight of the people of Ayodhya, Śrī Rāma lays himself down on a bed of leaves bewailing the lot of his parents and feeling reassured by the thought of Bharata's noble qualities; while Lakṣmaṇa opens his dialogue with Sumantra on the divine excellences of Śrī Rāma. Waking up in the meantime, Śrī Rāma urges the charioteer-minister to drive the chariot in such a way as to put the citizens that had accompanied them off the scent and lead them to think that the chariot had turned back towards Ayodhya instead of proceeding towards the forest. He then mounts the chariot along with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa and presses on to the forest. 407

47. The citizens that had followed Śrī Rāma in his journey to the forest wake to find Śrī Rāma and his party gone and begin to reproach themselves. Overcome with grief they hunt up the tracks of his chariot; but unable to find them, they helplessly return to Ayodhya in utter despondency. 411

48. Told of Śrī Rāma's departure for the forest by the citizens who had gone out with Śrī Rāma and returned, unable as they were to find out the tracks of his chariot, their wives reproach Kaikeyī and break into lamentation. 413

49. Having covered a long distance in the meantime Śrī Rāma finishes his morning bath and devotions and, having crossed the Vedaśruti, Gomatī and Syandikā rivers, presses forward talking with Sumantra. 416

50. Standing with his face turned towards Ayodhya, Śrī Rāma bids farewell to his birth-place and, sending back the people hailing from the countryside, who had come to see him, and crossing the frontiers of Kosala, Śrī Rāma reaches the bank of the holy Ganga. Alighting from the chariot under an Ingudī tree standing on the bank, he goes forward to meet Guha, the chief of the Niṣādas, who had come to meet him. Nay, worshipping the evening twilight and taking water alone (for food and drink), the prince lies down on the ground to repose for the night; while Sumantra, Guha and Lakṣmaṇa spend the night talking together. 418

51. Expressing his readiness to guard the Crown prince and his consort, keeping awake the whole night, Guha importunes Lakṣmaṇa to repose. Reminding Guha of Śrī Rāma's greatness, Lakṣmaṇa, however, tells him that even though the duty of guarding his princely brother and his consort could as well be entrusted to Guha, he felt that he did not deserve to lie down in the presence of his elder brother and sister-in-law and preferred to remain awake. Expressing grief for his royal father and loving mothers he therefore spends the night talking with Guha. 423

52. While about to step into the boat brought by Guha's men and asked by Guha if he could be of any further use to the prince, Śrī Rāma enjoins him to obey the emperor. Importuned by Sumantra to take him as a personal attendant to the forest, the prince declines his loving offer and, expostulating with him, sends him back to Ayodhya. Entangling their locks into a thick mass with the milk of a banyan tree procured by Guha, Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa with Sītā get into the boat. On reaching the middle of the stream Sītā offers prayers to Mother Ganga (the deity presiding over the stream) and after crossing the river all the three halt for the night at the foot of a tree. 426

53. Apprehending trouble for Kausalyā and others at the hands of Kaikeyī, Śrī Rāma, who was seated at the foot of a banyan tree and was a past master in the art of persuasion, persuades Lakṣmaṇa to the best of his ability to return to Ayodhya. Lakṣmaṇa, however, pleads inability to survive in his absence and does not budge an inch from his resolution to stay with his eldest brother. Śrī Rāma, therefore, yields and sets his seal to his continuing with him during his exile. 435

54. Set out on his journey for the Daṇḍaka forest with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa, Śrī Rāma reaches at dusk the hermitage of Sage Bharadwāja in the vicinity of the confluence of the holy Ganga and Yamuna rivers. Paying due honours to Śrī Rāma and his party, the sage recommends Chitrakoot as the fittest place for him to sojourn in. Spending the night in discourses on various topics with him, the sage grants him leave early next morning to depart for Chitrakoot. 439

55. Sage Bharadwāja tells Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, even as they set out on their journey to Chitrakoot, the route by which they should proceed. Accompanied by Sītā, Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa cross the Yamuna on a raft prepared by themselves In the evening they halt on the bank of the Yamuna along with Sītā, who is rejoiced to get fruits and blossoms of her liking. 443

56. Moving further next morning and rejoicing on the way to see the loveliness of the forest, the party reaches Chitrakoot and enters the hermitage of Vālmīki. Making up his mind to sojourn there with the permission of the sage, Śrī Rāma gets Lakṣmaṇa to erect a hut of leaves for themselves and, worshipping the deities presiding over the structure, they solemnly enter their abode at a propitious hour. 446

57. Having been told of Śrī Rāma's departure for Chitrakoot by the spies of Guha and taking leave of the latter, Sumantra drives back to Ayodhya. Entering the royal gynaeceum, he submits to the emperor what he reported earlier to the citizens who followed his chariot. Daśaratha and Kausalyā fall into a swoon to hear about Śrī Rāma's departure for Chitrakoot, and all the inmates of the gynaeceum burst into a wail from agony. 450

58. Bewailing the lot of Śrī Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa, who did not in any way deserve the hardships they were undergoing in the forest, the emperor urges Sumantra to deliver their parting message and the charioteer proceeds to tell him what they said. 453

59. To satisfy the emperor's curiosity Sumantra tells him further of Śrī Rāma's departure for the forest, and also apprises him of the pitiable condition of the animate as well as of the inanimate creation in his realm as also of his capital consequent on Śrī Rāma's exile. Hearing of the woeful tale, Daśaratha raves like a madman in many ways in the presence of the charioteer-minister. 457

60. Sumantra does not succeed in soothing the agony of Kausalyā, who tossed about on the floor due to excess of grief over her separation from Śrī Rāma, even though he consoles her by telling her that Śrī Rāma, being resolute and high-minded, was living in the forest free from agony. 460

61. Apprehending danger to the king from his inability to bear the grief caused by separation from Śrī Rāma, Kausalyā, though foremost among devoted wives, twits Daśaratha. 462

62. When reproached in harsh words by Kausalyā, though already feeling disconsolate through separation from his sons and daughter-in-law, Daśaratha falls into a swoon recalling his past sin in the form of killing a hermit boy, which was responsible for his present misfortune. On waking from his swoon he tries with joined palms to conciliate Kausalyā and, on the latter reciprocating his sentiments, the emperor is lulled into a nap. 465

63. Waking from sleep after a while and recalling his sinful deed, which spelt death to him, Daśaratha proceeds to tell Kausalyā how, while he was Prince Regent of Ayodhya, he went out a hunting in the forest one day and heard during the last watch of the night the sound of a hermit boy filling his pitcher with water by submerging it into the Sarayu river. Mistaking the gurgling sound for the trumpeting of an elephant, the prince hit the boy with an arrow, which dug deep into his body and mortally wounded him. On approaching his quarry he discovered the fatal blunder and tendered his heartfelt apology to the hermit boy, who asked him to extract the arrow from his body and report the matter to his aged parents. The boy died immediately the arrow was taken out of his body. 467

64. Daśaratha continues to tell Kausalyā how, having sought the presence of the aged parents of the deceased, he apprised them of the

sad incident and escorted them to the river bank, where their son lay dead, how, clasping the boy to their bosom, they both piteously wailed and offered libations of water to his spirit for its benefit; how, invested with an ethereal body, the spirit ascended to heaven while consoling the aged couple and finally how, having cursed the king that he too would meet his death in his agony of separation from his son, the ascetic couple gave up the ghost and attained the Supreme. Having thus related the story of his imprecation and loudly lamenting, the emperor breathes his last with the thought of Śrī Rāma foremost in his mind. 472

65. When the emperor did not wake up even though roused by means of panegyrics sung by bards, accompanied by musical instruments played upon for the same purpose, the ladies of the gynaeceum conclude by other means that the king is dead; and soon after commences the loud wail of Kausalyā, Sumitrā and other queens. 479

66. Resting the head of the lifeless monarch in her own lap and severely reproaching Kaikeyī, Kausalyā grievously mourns for Śrī Rāma and other exiles. Holding back Kausalyā,—who was lamenting with her arms placed round her deceased husband's bosom—and consigning the emperor's dead body to a trough filled with oil, the ministers and other functionaries return each to his own abode in the evening. 482

67. Attributing the rise and fall of a kingdom to the presence and disappearance of its ruler, Mārkaṇḍeya and other great sages, who attended the king's court the following day, urge Vasiṣṭha to install any of the princes on the throne immediately. 485

68. With the concurrence of Mārkaṇḍeya and other sages, Vasiṣṭha despatches messengers to call back Bharata and Śatrughna from their maternal .grandfather's. They leave forthwith for the capital of Kekaya and quickly enter that city. 488

69. Finding Bharata oppressed and sad, his friends try to beguile him by means of music and narration of stories. But when the prince does not return to his normal mood even then, they inquire of him as to what makes him pensive and Bharata tells them how he saw a bad dream the previous night. 491

70. While Bharata was narrating to his friends the dream seen by him the previous night, the messengers from Ayodhya arrive in his presence and, bowing low to Bharata, communicate to him the orders of Sage Vasiṣṭha. Having heard of the welfare of all from the mouth of the messengers, the prince takes leave of his maternal grandfather and others and departs for Ayodhya. 493

71. When Bharata reaches Ayodhya after crossing many streams and rivers and passing through different territories and finds the city cheerless and wearing a deserted look, he sets about brooding and speculating as to what may be the reason for this and, speaking to the charioteer about it, enters the palace dejected and disconsolate. 496

72. Entering his father's apartments and not finding him there, Bharata moves to his mother's apartments and, having communicated to her the welfare of his maternal grandfather and others on being questioned by her, inquires of her the whereabouts of his father. Kaikeyī then breaks to him the news of his father's death, attributing it to Śrī Rāma's exile and holding herself responsible for the latter, and after comforting him calls upon him to get himself installed on the throne after finishing his father's obsequies. 500

73. Bitterly reproaching Kaikeyī in many ways, and cutting her to the quick by his caustic remarks, Bharata takes a vow before her to bring back Śrī Rāma from the forest, install him on the throne of Ayodhya and wait upon him as an attendant to offend her. 505

74. Severely reproaching his mother once more, and making up his mind not only to bring back Śrī Rāma from the forest and crown him king but also to go into exile for fourteen years in order to redeem his elder brother's vow, Bharata, who was filled with rage at the thought of the mischief wrought by his mother, cannot contain his grief and falls unconscious to the ground. 508

75. Swearing that what had already come to pass in the shape of exile of Śrī Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa and the resultant death of the King-Emperor was not to his liking, Bharata moves with Śatrughna to the apartments of his stepmother, Kausalyā, who speaks unkindly to him taunting him with the remark that his mother, Kaikeyī, had rendered good offices to him by securing for him the kingdom of Kosala sought after by him. Bharata, however, politely denies on a number of oaths all complicity in the machinations of his vile mother. Thereby coming to know his heart, the guileless Kauslayā places Bharata on her lap and weeps bitterly.. 511

76. Removing his father's dead body from the vessel full of oil and cremating it with the help of articles befitting an emperor, and offering libations of water to the spirit of the deceased on the bank of the Sarayu as enjoined by Vasiṣṭha, Bharata returns to Ayodhya. 518

77. Having performed with the help of Śatrughna all the obsequial rites relating to his deceased father on the twelfth day after his death, Bharata gifts to the Brahmans abundant gold and jewels as a part of the obsequies. Overwhelmed with grief on reaching the funeral pile in order to pick up the principal bones of the deceased on the thirteenth day, the prince drops to the ground. Rolling on the ground, Śatrughna for his part wails in profusion. Comforted by Vasiṣṭha and Sumantra, the two brothers urge the ministers to expedite the work of picking up the bones. 520

78. While Bharata is contemplating to undertake a journey to meet Śrī Rāma, Śatrughna blames Lakṣmaṇa for failing to restrain his father and forcibly prevent Śrī Rāma's exile. In the meantime Bharata catches sight of Mantharā standing at the door decked

with ornaments and points to her as the root of all mischief. Śatrughna thereupon pounces upon the maid-servant standing in the midst of her companions and, seizing her by her locks, drags her on the floor and reproaches Kaikeyī too. On the latter pleading for mercy on Mantharā's behalf, Bharata intervenes and Śatrughna lets her go. 523

79. On the fourteenth day the foremost of the counsellors entreat Bharata to accept the throne. Turning down their entreaty, Bharata, who is keen to bring Śrī Rāma back to Ayodhya, urges them to detail expert engineers to construct a road, bridges and causeways etc, to facilitate his journey to the place of Śrī Rāma's abode. 525

80. The engineers detailed by Bharata's ministers construct a broad passage from Ayodhya to the bank of the Ganga and render it easy to tread by erecting pavilions and digging wells here and there on the roadside. 527

81. The king's bards, panegyrists and minstrels having commenced eulogizing Bharata in the customary way in the midst of festal music at sunrise the following morning, Bharata stops it, disclaiming sovereignty, and complains to Śatrughna of the ill turn done to the world by his own mother. In the meantime Sage Vasiṣṭha enters the royal court and sends messengers to Bharata urging him to be present in the court; and in response to his call Bharata, accompanied by Śatrughna and others, enters the assembly. 529

82. Sage Vasiṣṭha urges Bharata to accept the kingdom bequeathed to him by his father and elder brother. Bharata, however, scornfully declines the offer and takes a solemn pledge to depart for the forest and try his level best to bring his elder brother back to Ayodhya. At his instance Sumantra gets a chariot ready to take him to the forest and brings the chariot to his presence. 531

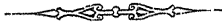
83. Leaving the capital early next morning, accompanied by the family priests, artisans, army and the citizens, and covering a long distance, Bharata reaches the bank of the holy Ganga at Śṛṅgaverapura, ruled by Guha, and, encamping the army, breaks journey in order to do Śrāddha and Tarpaṇa in honour of his deceased father on the bank of the Ganga and also to give rest to his followers. 535

84. Scenting mischief in the mind of Bharata, who was taking a large army with him, Guha orders the ferrymen to guard the boats so as to prevent Bharata's men from crossing the Ganga, and himself seeks the presence of Bharata in order to know his mind. Being satisfied about his good intention he entertains Bharata and his men with fruits and roots etc. brought by him and, on his having taken rest awhile and overcome his fatigue, allows him to advance. 537

85. Highly praising Guha, Bharata, while departing, inquires of him the way to the hermitage of Bharadwāja. Promising to follow the prince as a guide with his servants and placing his misgivings before him, Guha seeks to know his intentions about Śrī Rāma and consoles the prince, who was consequently bewailing, till dusk. 539

86. Guha reports to Bharata how Śrī Rāma and his party broke their journey at Śṛngaverapura and reproduces before him the dialogue that took place between Lakṣmaṇa and himself at night and further tells him how the two brothers entangled their locks into a thick mass, crossed the holy river with Sītā and left for the hermitage of Sage Bharadwāja. 541

87. Overwhelmed with grief to hear from the mouth of Guha how his two brothers got their hair entangled into a mass, Bharata falls unconscious on the ground. On regaining consciousness he despatches Guha to reassure mother Kausalyā, who is filled with apprehension about the safety of Śrī Rāma and his party on hearing of Bharata's swoon, and apprise her of its real cause and also of Śrī Rāma's welfare. While doing so Guha also tells her how Śrī Rāma and Sītā lay down on a bed of Kuśa grass prepared by Lakṣmaṇa with his own hands when the party broke journey at Śṛngaverapura and how Guha with Lakṣmaṇa kept watch the whole night for the protection of Śrī Rāma and Sītā. 544

88. Showing to Kausalyā and others the bed of Kuśa grass on which Śrī Rāma and Sītā spent their night, and contrasting it with the royal splendour and luxury in which he lived in Ayodhya, Bharata laments for him and, holding himself responsible for this turn of events and complimenting Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā for throwing their lot with Śrī Rāma and sharing his privations, makes up his mind henceforth to dwell in the forest as a representative of Śrī Rāma, wearing matted locks on his head like him. 546

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Śrī Rāma as an Exile

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते । पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

Kalyana Kalpataru

He who seeth Me everywhere, and seeth everything in Me,
Of him will I never lose hold, and he shall never lose hold of Me.

(*Bhagavad-Gītā* VI. 30)

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विश्वोद्भवस्थितिलयादिषु हेतुमेकं
मायाश्रयं विगतमायमचिन्त्यमूर्तिम् ।
आनन्दसान्द्रममलं निजबोधरूपं
सीतापतिं विदिततत्त्वमहं नमामि ॥

(Adhyātma-Rāmāyaṇa I. ii. 2.)

I salute the Spouse of Sītā, the one cause of the appearance, continuance and dissolution etc. of the universe, the Substratum of Māyā, yet untouched by Māyā, whose personality is incomprehensible, who is an embodiment of joy, who is free from all impurities, who is Self-Knowledge personified and who knows His own essential character.

A Prayer to Śrī Rāma

अहो विचित्रं तव राम चेष्टितं
मनुष्यभावेन विमोहितं जगत् ।
चलस्यजस्रं चरणादिवर्जितः
सम्पूर्ण आनन्दमयोऽतिमायिकः ॥

Oh, mysterious are Your ways, O Rāma ! The world stands deluded by your (seemingly) human nature. Though devoid of feet and other organs of action, You continuously walk. You are entirely full, Bliss personified and beyond the frontiers of Māyā.

मर्त्यावतारे मनुजाकृतिं हरिं
रामाभिधेयं रमणीयदेहिनम् ।
धनुर्धरं पद्मविशाललोचनं
भजामि नित्यं न परान् भजिष्ये ॥

I worship at all times Lord Viṣṇu, who during His descent in the mortal world has assumed a human semblance endowed with a charming personality with eyes big as a lotus, wielding a bow (in His hands) and assuming the name of Śrī Rāma. I shall worship no other deities.

यत्पादपङ्कजरजः श्रुतिभिर्विमृग्यं
यन्नाभिपङ्कजभवः कमलासनश्च ।
यन्नामसाररसिको भगवान् पुरारि-
स्तं रामचन्द्रमनिशं हृदि भावयामि ॥

I ever visualize installed in my heart the celebrated Śrī Rāma, the dust of whose lotus feet is earnestly sought for (even) by the Śrutis (the Upaniṣads), (nay) the lotus sprung from whose navel is the birth-place of Brahmā (the creator) and the sweetness of whose names is enjoyed by Lord Śiva (the Destroyer of the demon Tripura).

यस्यावतारचरितानि विरञ्चिलोके
गायन्ति नारदमुखा भवपद्मजाद्याः ।
आनन्दजाश्रुपरिषिक्तकुचाग्रसीमा
वागीश्वरी च तमहं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥

I seek as my refuge Śrī Rāma, the stories of whose descent (into the world of matter) are sung by celestial sages like Nārada, gods like Lord Śiva and Brahmā and (last but not the least) by Saraswatī (the Goddess of speech), the precincts of Her heaving breasts being washed with tears of joy.

सोऽयं परात्मा पुरुषः पुराणः
एकः स्वयंज्योतिरनन्त आद्यः ।
मायातनुं लोकविमोहनीयां
धत्ते परानुग्रह एष रामः ॥

The same Śrī Rāma, who is no other than the Supreme Spirit, the most ancient Being, one without a second, endless and the primeval Source of all, assumed as an act of supreme grace a deceptive form enchanting for the whole world.

अयं हि विश्वोद्भवसंयमाना-
मेकः स्वमायागुणबिम्बितो यः ।
विरञ्चिविष्ण्वीश्वरनामभेदान्
धत्ते स्वतन्त्रः परिपूर्ण आत्मा ॥

Indeed, He is the Absolute and all-perfect Spirit, who, though one, severally assumes the diverse names of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva when reflected through the three Guṇas (Rajas, Sattva and Tamas) of His own Māyā.

नमोऽस्तु ते राम तवाङ्घ्रिपङ्कजं
श्रिया धृतं वक्षसि लालितं प्रियात् ।
आक्रान्तमेकेन जगत्त्रयं पुरा
ध्येयं मुनीन्द्रैरभिमानवर्जितैः ॥

Your lotus feet, O Rāma, are placed by Goddess Lakṣmī on Her bosom and caressed with love. In the ancient times (when You appeared as the divine Dwarf) all the three worlds were measured by You in one stride (in order to rob Bali of his sovereignty of the three worlds). (Nay) Your lotus feet are meditated upon by the chief of hermits, who are free from pride. Hail to You !

(Adhyātma-Rāmāyaṇa I. v. 44, 46—51)

श्रीसीतारामचन्द्राभ्यां नमः

श्रीमद्वाल्मीकीयरामायणम्

अयोध्याकाण्डम्

एकोनचत्वारिंशः सर्गः

The Vālmīki-Rāmāyaṇa

Book Two

(Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa)

Canto XXXIX

Sent away by Daśaratha, Sumantra gets a chariot ready to take Śrī Rāma and his party to the forest and Sītā adorns herself with jewels brought by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Kausalyā tenders opportune advice to her daughter-in-law and the latter bows to it. Śrī Rāma comforts Kausalyā and offers apology to his other mothers, who burst into a wail.

रामस्य तु वचः श्रुत्वा मुनिवेषधरं च तम् । समीक्ष्य सह भार्याभी राजा विगतचेतनः ॥ १ ॥
नैनं दुःखेन संतप्तः प्रत्यवैक्षत राघवम् । न चैनमभिसम्प्रेक्ष्य प्रत्यभाषत दुर्मनाः ॥ २ ॥
स मुहूर्तमिवासंज्ञो दुःखितश्च महीपतिः । विललाप महाबाहू राममेवानुचिन्तयन् ॥ ३ ॥
मन्ये खलु मया पूर्वं विवत्सा बहवः कृताः । प्राणिनो हिंसिता वापि तन्मामिदमुपस्थितम् ॥ ४ ॥
न त्वेव नागते काले देहाच्च्यवति जीवितम् । कैकेय्या क्लिश्यमानस्य मृत्युर्मम न विद्यते ॥ ५ ॥
योऽहं पावकसंकाशं पश्यामि पुरतः स्थितम् । विहाय वसने सूक्ष्मे तापसाच्छादमात्मजम् ॥ ६ ॥
एकस्याः खलु कैकेय्याः कृतेऽयं खिद्यते जनः । स्वार्थे प्रयतमानायाः संश्रित्य निकृतिं त्विमाम् ॥ ७ ॥

Hearing the intercession of Śrī Rāma and perceiving him clad in the garb of a hermit, the king for his part with his consorts fell unconscious. (1) Sore stricken with agony he could neither regale his eyes on Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) nor could he accost him even on casting a look at him awhile, disconsolate as he was. (2) Remaining senseless as it were for an hour or so and feeling distressed, the mighty-armed monarch repented in various ways (as follows), thinking all the time of Śrī Rāma alone:—(3) "I think in my past life many a cow indeed was robbed of its calf or in any case many living beings were destroyed by me. Hence this (calamity) has befallen me. (4) Surely life does not depart from the body until the

(appointed) hour has arrived. (It is therefore that) death does not claim me even though I am being tormented by Kaikeyī and even though I behold my son, effulgent as fire, standing before me clad in the robes of an ascetic, having shed garments of fine fabric. (5-6) Indeed (all) these people have to suffer on account of Kaikeyī alone, who, having resorted to this roguery, is striving hard to gain her object." (7)

एवमुक्त्वा तु वचनं बाष्पेण विहतेन्द्रियः । रामेति सकृदेवोक्त्वा व्याहर्तुं न शशाक सः ॥ ८ ॥
संज्ञां तु प्रतिलभ्यैव मुहूर्तात् स महीपतिः । नेत्राभ्यामश्रुपूर्णाभ्यां सुमन्त्रमिदमब्रवीत् ॥ ९ ॥

Having uttered these words and saying "O Rāma !" only once, the emperor, however, whose vocal organs had been choked by tears, could not speak any more. Just regaining his consciousness after an hour or so the said emperor for his part spoke to Sumantra with his eyes flooded with tears as follows:— (8-9)

औपवाह्यं रथ युक्त्वा त्वमायाहि हयोत्तमैः । प्रापयैनं महाभागमितो जनपदात् परम् ॥ १० ॥
एवं मन्ये गुणवता गुणानां फलमुच्यते । पित्रा मात्रा च यत्साधुर्वीरो निर्वास्यते वनम् ॥ ११ ॥
राज्ञो वचनमाज्ञाय सुमन्त्रः शीघ्रविक्रमः । योजयित्वा ययौ तत्र रथमश्वैरलंकृतम् ॥ १२ ॥
त रथं राजपुत्राय सूतः कनकभूषितम् । आचचक्षेऽञ्जलिं कृत्वा युक्तं परमवाजिभिः ॥ १३ ॥
राजा सत्वरमाहूय व्यापृतं वित्तसंचये । उवाच देशकालज्ञो निश्चितं सर्वतः शुचिः ॥ १४ ॥
वासांसि च वरार्हाणि भूषणानि महान्ति च । वर्षाण्येतानि संख्याय वैदेह्याः क्षिप्रमानय ॥ १५ ॥
नरेन्द्रेणैवमुक्तस्तु गत्वा कोशगृहं ततः । प्रायच्छत् सर्वमाहृत्य सीतायै क्षिप्रमेव तत् ॥ १६ ॥

"Fitting with the best of horses a chariot used for pleasure-drives, return you (soon) and take this highly blessed prince beyond this territory. (10) Since a pious and valiant son is being exiled to the forest by his (very) father and mother, such I believe is declared (by the scriptures) to be the reward of virtues of the virtuous." (11) Bowing to the king's command and fitting with horses a chariot decked with ornaments, Sumantra, who was swift of pace, returned (quickly) to that (very) spot (where Śrī Rāma stood ready with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa to depart for the forest). (12) Joining his palms (as a token of submission), the charioteer announced to the Crown prince (Śrī Rāma) the arrival of that chariot, decked with gold and fitted with excellent horses. (13) Promptly summoning (to his presence) the officer placed in charge of the treasury, the king, who knew what should be done at a particular place and time and was free from all impurities (in the shape of duplicity etc.), spoke in a decisive tone (as follows):—(14) "Taking into consideration (all) these years (that Sītā has to spend in exile), (pray) speedily bring for Sītā (a princess of the Videha kingdom) costly robes and valuable ornaments." (15) Proceeding to the treasury when commanded thus by the king, and bringing everything (that he was instructed to fetch), the officer for his part immediately delivered the (whole) lot to Sītā. (16)

सा सुजाता सुजातानि वैदेही प्रस्थिता वनम् । भूषयामास गात्राणि तैर्विचित्रैर्विभूषणैः ॥ १७ ॥
व्यराजयत वैदेही वेश्म तत् सुविभूषिता । उद्यतोंऽशुमतः काले खं प्रभेव विवस्वतः ॥ १८ ॥
तां भुजाभ्यां परिष्वज्य श्वश्रूर्वचनमब्रवीत् । अनाचरन्तीं कृपणं मूर्ध्न्युपाघ्राय मैथिलीम् ॥ १९ ॥

Bound as she was for the forest, Sītā (a princess of the Videha kingdom), of noble (uncommon) birth (in that she was not born from a womb), adorned her limbs, which were endowed with propitious marks, with those marvellous jewels. (17) Splendidly and profusely decked (with ornaments) Sītā (a princess of the Videha kingdom) illumined that palace (where she stood) in the same way as the radiance of the rising sun with its bright rays illumines the sky in the morning (particularly when there is no mist or cloud). (18) Folding in her arms that princess of Mithilā, who never behaved in an unseemly way, and smelling her head (as a token of affection), her mother-in-law (Kausalyā) spoke in the following words:—(19)

असत्यः सर्वलोकेऽस्मिन् सततं सत्कृताः प्रियैः । भर्तारं नानुमन्यन्ते विनिपातगतं स्त्रियः ॥ २० ॥
एष स्वभावो नारीणामनुभूय पुरा सुखम् । अल्पामप्यापदं प्राप्य दुष्यन्ति प्रजहत्यपि ॥ २१ ॥
असत्यशीला विकृता दुर्गा अहृदयाः सदा । असत्यः पापसंकल्पाः क्षणमात्रविरागिणः ॥ २२ ॥
न कुलं न कृतं विद्या न दत्तं नापि संग्रहः । स्त्रीणां गृह्णाति हृदयमनित्यहृदया हि ताः ॥ २३ ॥
साध्वीनां तु स्थितानां तु शीले सत्ये श्रुते स्थिते । स्त्रीणां पवित्रं परमं पतिरेको विशिष्यते ॥ २४ ॥
स त्वया नावमन्तव्यः पुत्रः प्रव्राजितो वनम् । तव देवसमस्त्वेष निर्धनः सधनोऽपि वा ॥ २५ ॥

"Women who, though constantly adored by their beloved consorts, cease to esteem their husband who has fallen on evil days are dubbed as wicked throughout this world. (20) Having enjoyed happiness in the past they malign and even desert their husband on meeting with the least misfortune: such is the nature of (wicked) women. (21) Wicked are those women who are ever untruthful by nature and swayed by passion, are difficult to comprehend, heartless and of sinful resolve and who get estranged in a moment. (22) Neither (noble) birth nor good turn, nor learning, nor gift nor even marriage ties capture the heart of (such) women, fickle of heart as they are. (23) In the case, however, of virtuous women, who are in fact devoted to good conduct, truthfulness and the precepts of their elders and keep within the bounds of decorum (laid down for their family), their husband is the most sacred object and he alone excels all. (24) Though (being) sent into exile to the forest, my son, Śrī Rāma, should not be despised by you. Endowed with means or resourceless, he is surely as good as a deity to you." (25)

विज्ञाय वचनं सीता तस्या धर्मार्थसंहितम् । कृत्वाञ्जलिमुवाचेदं श्वश्रूमभिमुखे स्थिता ॥ २६ ॥
करिष्ये सर्वमेवाहमार्या यदनुशास्ति माम् । अभिज्ञास्मि यथा भर्तुर्वर्तितव्यं श्रुतं च मे ॥ २७ ॥
न मामसज्जनेनार्या समानयितुमर्हति । धर्माद् विचलितुं नाहमलं चन्द्रादिव प्रभा ॥ २८ ॥
नातन्त्री विद्यते वीणा नाचक्रो विद्यते रथः । नापतिः सुखमेधेत या स्यादपि शतात्मजा ॥ २९ ॥
मितं ददाति हि पिता मितं भ्राता मितं सुतः । अमितस्य तु दातारं भर्तारं का न पूजयेत् ॥ ३० ॥
साहमेवं गता श्रेष्ठा श्रुतधर्मपरावरा । आर्ये किमवमन्येयं स्त्रिया भर्ता हि दैवतम् ॥ ३१ ॥

Perceiving her advice to be in consonance with righteousness, which constituted her aim (in life), and joining her palms, Sītā replied to her mother-in-law as follows, standing in front of her:—(26) "I shall surely do all that your worthy self instructs me to do. I know how I should behave towards my husband and I have (also) heard about it (from my elders). (27) Your noble self ought not to equate me with wicked women.

I am unable to deviate from virtue (even) as moonlight is incapable of parting from the moon. (28) A Vīṇā is of no use without chords and a chariot is of no use without wheels. Nor can a wife who is bereft of her husband prosper in a happy state even though she may have a hundred sons. (29) Indeed a father bestows limited joy, a brother (too) bestows limited joy and a son (as well) bestows limited happiness. What woman, then, would not adore her husband, the bestower of unlimited joy ? (30) Having heard about the special and ordinary duties of a wife from my superiors and thus convinced that the husband is a veritable deity to a (married) woman, how can I, such as I am, despise my husband, O venerable lady ?" (31)

सीताया वचनं श्रुत्वा कौसल्या हृदयंगमम् । शुद्धसत्त्वा मुमोचाश्रु सहसा दुःखहर्षजम् ॥ ३२ ॥
तां प्राञ्जलिरभिप्रेक्ष्य मातृमध्येऽतिसत्कृताम् । रामः परमधर्मात्मा मातरं वाक्यमब्रवीत् ॥ ३३ ॥
अम्ब मा दुःखिता भूत्वा पश्येस्त्वं पितरं मम । क्षयोऽपि वनवासस्य क्षिप्रमेव भविष्यति ॥ ३४ ॥
सुप्तायास्ते गमिष्यन्ति नव वर्षाणि पञ्च च । समग्रमिह सम्प्राप्तं मां द्रक्ष्यसि सुहृद्वृतम् ॥ ३५ ॥
एतावदभिनीतार्थमुक्त्वा स जननीं वचः । त्रयःशतशतार्धा हि ददर्शावेक्ष्य मातरः ॥ ३६ ॥
ताश्चापि स तथैवार्ता मातर्दशरथात्मजः । धर्मयुक्तमिदं वाक्यं निजगाद कृताञ्जलिः ॥ ३७ ॥
संवासात् परुषं किंचिदज्ञानादपि यत् कृतम् । तन्मे समुपजानीत सर्वाश्चामन्त्रयामि वः ॥ ३८ ॥
वचनं राघवस्यैतद् धर्मयुक्तं समाहितम् । शुश्रुवुस्ताः स्त्रियः सर्वाः शोकोपहतचेतसः ॥ ३९ ॥

Hearing Sītā's reply, which touched (the chords of) her heart, Kausalyā of pure mind suddenly began to shed tears born of agony (at the thought of the impending separation from her sons and daughter-in-law) and delight (over the pious sentiments expressed by Sītā). (32) Gazing at Kausalyā (his own mother), who was highly respected among his mothers, Śrī Rāma, who had a supremely pious mind, spoke to her with joined palms as follows:—(33) "(Pray) don't you regard my father with a doleful countenance. The end of exile too will come rather soon. (34) Nine years and five will slip past you (even) while you are asleep. (One fine morning) you will find me duly arrived (back) here (in Ayodhya) in my entire being (along with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa), surrounded by my friends and relations." (35) Having made the aforesaid comprehensive submission to his mother, and gazing on his three hundred and fifty stepmothers he actually found those mothers too distressed in the same way (as his own mother was). Nay, joining his palms the said son of Daśaratha (once more) made the following submission, which was in consonance with (the spirit of) righteousness:—(36-37) "(Pray) forgive whatever unkind word or even act may have been uttered or done by me through ignorance because we lived together. Now I take leave of you all." (38) All those (royal) ladies whose mind was agitated through grief, heard the aforesaid cool submission of Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu), which conformed to (the principles of) righteousness. (39)

जज्ञेऽथ तासां संनादः क्रौञ्चीनामिव निःस्वनः । मानवेन्द्रस्य भार्याणामेवं वदति राघवे ॥ ४० ॥
मुरजपणवमेघघोषवद् दशरथवेश्म बभूव यत् पुरा ।
विलपितपरिदेवनाकुलं व्यसनगतं तदभूत् सुदुःखितम् ॥ ४१ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे एकोनचत्वारिंशः सर्गः ॥ ३९ ॥

While Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) was speaking thus, an outcry resembling the wail of female cranes rose from the mouth of those consorts of Dāśaratha (a ruler of men). (40) The same palace of Daśaratha which was formerly marked with the sound of tomtoms, large drums and Meghas (a musical instrument the sound of which resembled the rumbling of clouds) was now filled with extreme agony, agitated as it was through wails and cries and fallen on evil days. (41)

Thus ends Canto Thirty-nine in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

चत्वारिंशः सर्गः

Canto XL

Going clockwise round Daśaratha (as a token of respect), Sītā, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa greet him. Accompanied by Sītā, Śrī Rāma salutes Kausalyā. Lakṣmaṇa too hails Kausalyā first and then his own mother, Sumitrā. Sumitrā for her part tenders salutary advice to her son. The princes and the princess having mounted the chariot, Sumantra flicks the horses. The citizens that had assembled closely follow the chariot; but unable to keep pace with its swift movement, they return desolate. Daśaratha too runs after the chariot along with Kausalyā and others, but being unable to walk begins to totter and stops short on the road yielding to the remonstrances of his wise ministers.

अथ रामश्च सीता च लक्ष्मणश्च कृताञ्जलिः । उपसंगृह्य राजानं चक्रुर्दीनाः प्रदक्षिणम् ॥ १ ॥
तं चापि समनुज्ञाप्य धर्मज्ञः सह सीतया । राघवः शोकसम्मूढो जननीमभ्यवादयत् ॥ २ ॥
अन्वक्षं लक्ष्मणो भ्रातुः कौसल्यामभ्यवादयत् । अपि मातुः सुमित्राया जग्राह चरणौ पुनः ॥ ३ ॥
तं वन्दमानं रुदती माता सौमित्रिमब्रवीत् । हितकामा महाबाहुं मूर्ध्न्युपाघ्राय लक्ष्मणम् ॥ ४ ॥
सृष्टस्त्वं वनवासाय स्वनुरक्तः सुहृज्जने । रामे प्रमादं मा कार्षीः पुत्र भ्रातरि गच्छति ॥ ५ ॥
व्यसनी वा समृद्धो वा गतिरेष तवानघ । एष लोके सतां धर्मो यज्ज्येष्ठवशगो भवेत् ॥ ६ ॥
इदं हि वृत्तमुचितं कुलस्यास्य सनातनम् । दानं दीक्षा च यज्ञेषु तनुत्यागो मृधेषु हि ॥ ७ ॥
लक्ष्मणं त्वेवमुक्त्वासौ संसिद्धं प्रियराघवम् । सुमित्रा गच्छ गच्छेति पुनः पुनरुवाच तम् ॥ ८ ॥
रामं दशरथं विद्धि मां विद्धि जनकात्मजाम् । अयोध्यामटवीं विद्धि गच्छ तात यथासुखम् ॥ ९ ॥

Clasping the feet of and bowing to the king, Śrī Rāma and Sītā as well as Lakṣmaṇa, who felt miserable (because of their inability to be of any service to their aged parents) forthwith went round him clockwise with joined palms. (1) Duly obtaining leave of him and accompanied by Sītā, Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu), who knew what is right and stood stupefied through grief, bowed to Kausalyā. (2) Following at the heels of his brother,

Lakṣmaṇa too greeted Kausalyā; then he clasped the feet of his (own) mother, Sumitrā. (3) Smelling (as a token of affection) the head of the mighty-armed Lakṣmaṇa, who was saluting her, the mother, who wished well of him, spoke weeping to that son of hers (as follows):—(4) "Excessively fond as you are of your kinsman, Rāma, you have been permitted (by me) to dwell in the forest (with your eldest half-brother). (But) do not neglect, my son, the service of your (half-) brother, Rāma, who is going (with you). (5) He (alone) is your refuge, whether in adversity or (in) affluent (circumstances), O sinless one ! Such is the rule of conduct followed by the virtuous in the world that a younger brother should be subject to the control of his elder brother. (6) To practise charity, to consecrate oneself for sacrificial performances and to drop one's body on the field of battle alone—this indeed constitutes the conduct appropriate to this race (of the Raghus) for all time." (7) Having exhorted Lakṣmaṇa as aforesaid, the said Sumitrā repeatedly said to the celebrated Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu), who was loved by all and was bent on leaving (for the forest), "Fare forth ! Fare forth !! (May all be well with you)." (8) (She said to Lakṣmaṇa again,) "Know Rāma to be Daśaratha (your father), look upon Sītā (the daughter of Janaka) as myself (your mother) and esteem the forest as Ayodhya (your home) and depart, dear son, happily." (9)

ततः सुमन्त्रः काकुत्स्थं प्राञ्जलिर्वाक्यमब्रवीत् । विनीतो विनयज्ञश्च मातलिर्वासवं यथा ॥ १० ॥
रथमारोह भद्रं ते राजपुत्र महायशः । क्षिप्रं त्वां प्रापयिष्यामि यत्र मां राम वक्ष्यसे ॥ ११ ॥
चतुर्दश हि वर्षाणि वस्तव्यानि वने त्वया । तान्युपक्रमितव्यानि यानि देव्या प्रचोदितः ॥ १२ ॥
तं रथं सूर्यसंकाशं सीता हृष्टेन चेतसा । आरुरोह वरारोहा कृत्वालंकारमात्मनः ॥ १३ ॥
वनवासं हि संख्याय वासांस्याभरणानि च । भर्तारमनुगच्छन्त्यै सीतायै श्वशुरो ददौ ॥ १४ ॥
तथैवायुधजातानि भ्रातृभ्यां कवचानि च । रथोपस्थे प्रविन्यस्य सचर्म कठिनं च यत् ॥ १५ ॥
अथो ज्वलनसंकाशं चामीकरविभूषितम् । तमारुरुहतुस्तूर्णं भ्रातरौ रामलक्ष्मणौ ॥ १६ ॥

Then Sumantra, who was meek and knew how to behave politely, submitted with joined palms as follows to Śrī Rāma (a scion of Kakutstha) even as Mātali (the charioteer of Indra) would to Indra (the ruler of gods):—(10) "Mount the chariot, O highly illustrious prince; may all be well with you. I shall speedily take you to whatever place you will direct me to go. (11) Indeed those fourteen years that have to be spent by you in the forest as directed by the queen (Kaikeyī) are to be considered as having commenced (this very day)." (12) Having decked herself (with the articles of wearing apparel and ornaments bestowed on her by her father-in-law), Sītā, who had comely limbs, mounted with a delighted mind that chariot, which was resplendent like the sun. (13) Having carefully arranged in the hinder part of the chariot the raiments and jewels which her father-in-law, duly taking into account (the period of) her exile in the forest, had bestowed on Sītā while she was ready to accompany her husband (to the forest), and even so the sets of weapons and the pieces of armour he had given to the two brothers, as well as the basket, covered with leather, and the spade, the two brothers, Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, then quickly mounted the aforesaid chariot, which was decked in gold and shone like fire. (14-16)

सीतातृतीयानारूढान् दृष्ट्वा रथमचोदयत् । सुमन्त्रः सम्मतानश्वान् वायुवेगसमाञ्जवे ॥ १७ ॥
प्रयाते तु महारण्यं चिररात्राय राघवे । बभूव नगरे मूर्च्छा बलमूर्च्छा जनस्य च ॥ १८ ॥
तत् समाकुलसम्भ्रान्तं मत्तसंकुपितद्विपम् । हयसिञ्जितनिर्घोषं पुरमासीन्महास्वनम् ॥ १९ ॥
ततः सबालवृद्धा सा पुरी परमपीडिता । राममेवाभिदुद्राव घर्मार्तः सलिलं यथा ॥ २० ॥
पार्श्वतः पृष्ठतश्चापि लम्बमानास्तदुन्मुखाः । बाष्पपूर्णमुखाः सर्वे तमूचुर्भृशनिःस्वनाः ॥ २१ ॥

Seeing the (three) exiles, of whom Sītā constituted the third, mounted on the chariot, Sumantra drove the horses, which were thought highly of and vied in speed with the velocity of the wind. (17) Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) having departed for the great forest (of Daṇḍaka) for a long term, unconsciousness, however, prevailed (among the people) in the city; there was unconsciousness (in the army including even horses and elephants) as well as among the people visiting Ayodhya (from the districts). (18) Confounded and flurried with its elephants in rut highly excited, and resonant with the tinkling of the ornaments of its horses, the aforesaid city (of Ayodhya) was filled with great noise. (19) Sore stricken with agony, that city including the youngsters as well as the old people rushed towards Śrī Rāma in the same way as one oppressed with the sun would rush towards water. (20) Clinging to the sides and back (of the chariot) with their faces turned towards him and bathed with tears, all submitted to Sumantra in a loud voice:—(21)

संयच्छ वाजिनां रश्मीन् सूत याहि शनैः शनैः । मुखं द्रक्ष्याम रामस्य दुर्दर्शं नो भविष्यति ॥ २२ ॥
आयसं हृदयं नूनं राममातुरसंशयम् । यद देवगर्भप्रतिमे वनं याति न भिद्यते ॥ २३ ॥
कृतकृत्या हि वैदेही छायेवानुगता पतिम् । न जहाति रता धर्मे मेरुमर्कप्रभा यथा ॥ २४ ॥
अहो लक्ष्मण सिद्धार्थः सततं प्रियवादिनम् । भ्रातरं देवसंकाशं यस्त्वं परिचरिष्यसि ॥ २५ ॥
महत्येषा हि ते बुद्धिरेष चाभ्युदयो महान् । एष स्वर्गस्य मार्गश्च यदेनमनुगच्छसि ॥ २६ ॥
एवं वदन्तस्ते सोढुं न शेकुर्बाष्पमागतम् । नरास्तमनुगच्छन्ति प्रियमिक्ष्वाकुनन्दनम् ॥ २७ ॥

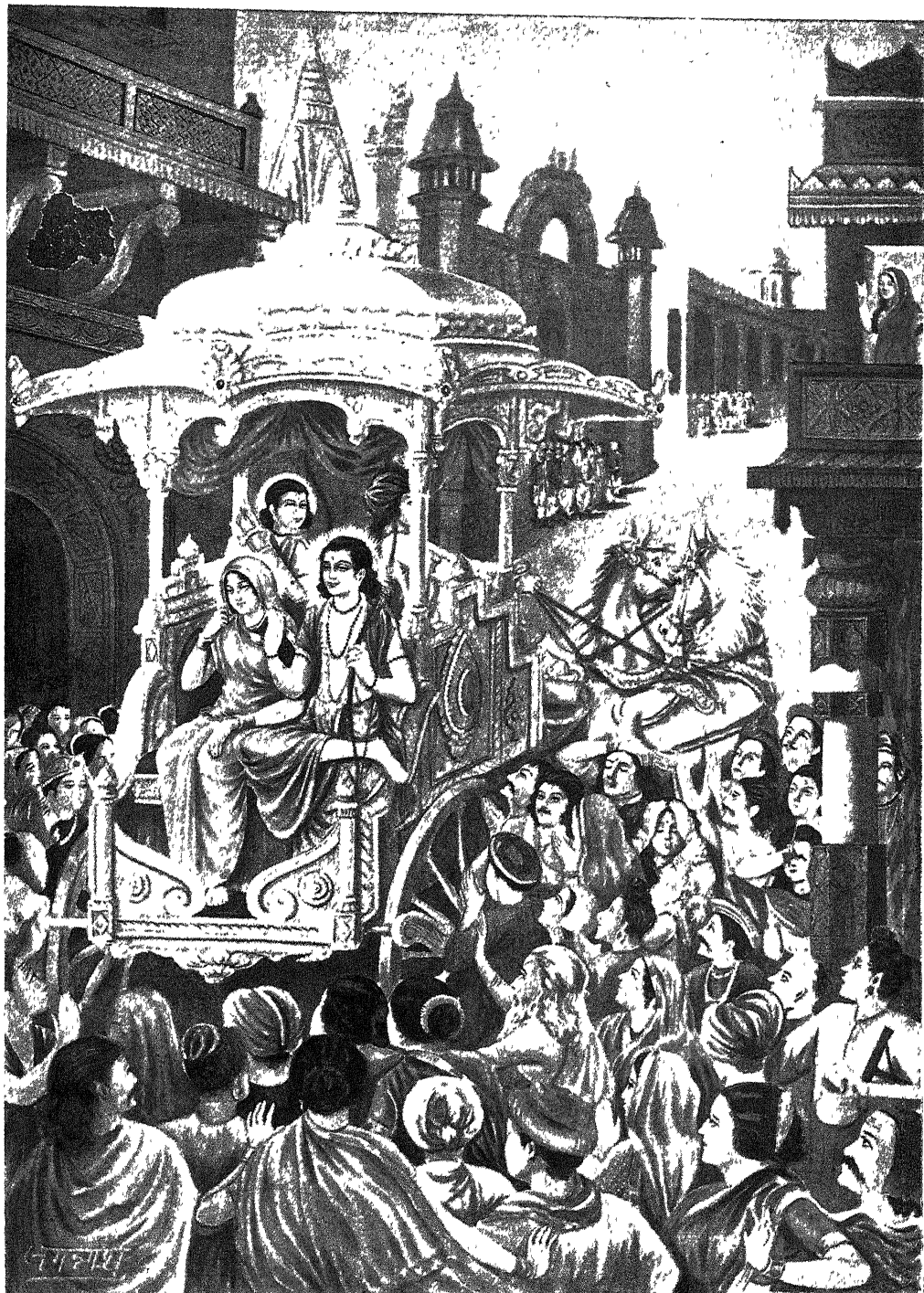
"Hold in the reins of the horses, O charioteer, and drive slowly and slowly. We would behold the countenance of Śrī Rāma, which would (henceforth) be difficult to behold. (22) The heart of Kausalyā (Śrī Rāma's mother) is surely and undoubtedly made of steel in that it does not get riven (even) when her son, who resembles an offspring of gods, is departing for the forest ! (23) Sītā (a princess of the Videha kingdom) has done what ought to be done inasmuch as she follows her husband like a shadow and, devoted to her duty, does not leave him any more than the light of the sun forsakes Mount Meru. (24) Oh Lakṣmaṇa, you are accomplished of purpose in that you are going to serve your godlike brother, who is ever disposed to speak kind words (to all). (25) Indeed this constitutes your great wisdom; nay, this is your great good fortune and this is the way to heaven (for you) that you are following Śrī Rāma !" (26) Saying so those men could not restrain their tears, that had (already) welled up (in their eyes), and followed their beloved Śrī Rāma (the delight of the Ikṣwākus). (27)

अथ राजा वृतः स्त्रीभिर्दीनाभिर्दीनचेतनः । निर्जगाम प्रियं पुत्रं द्रक्ष्यामीति ब्रुवन् गृहात् ॥ २८ ॥
शुश्रुवे चाग्रतः स्त्रीणां रुदतीनां महास्वनः । यथा नादः करेणूनां बद्धे महति कुञ्जरे ॥ २९ ॥

पिता हि राजा काकुत्स्थः श्रीमान् सन्नस्तदा बभौ । परिपूर्णः शशी काले ग्रहेणोपप्लुतो यथा ॥ ३० ॥
स च श्रीमानचिन्त्यात्मा रामो दशरथात्मजः । सूतं संचोदयामास त्वरितं वाह्यतामिति ॥ ३१ ॥
रामो याहीति तं सूतं तिष्ठेति च जनस्तथा । उभयं नाशकत् सूतः कर्तुमध्वनि चोदितः ॥ ३२ ॥
निर्गच्छति महाबाहौ रामे पौरजनाश्रुभिः । पतितैरभ्यवहितं प्रणनाश महीरजः ॥ ३३ ॥
रुदिताश्रुपरिद्यूनं हाहाकृतमचेतनम् । प्रयाणे राघवस्यासीत् पुरं परमपीडितम् ॥ ३४ ॥
सुस्राव नयनैः स्त्रीणामस्रमायाससम्भवम् । मीनसंक्षोभचलितैः सलिलं पङ्कजैरिव ॥ ३५ ॥

Meanwhile, surrounded by his consorts,—who were (all) feeling miserable,—and distressed in mind, the king sallied forth from his palace, saying "I shall see my beloved son." (28) In front of him was heard the great noise of crying women, resembling the trumpeting of she-elephants on a lordly elephant (the leader of their herd) having been bound (with chains). (29) At that time, the father (of Śrī Rāma), the glorious King Daśaratha (a scion of Kakutstha), looked lustreless indeed like the full moon overshadowed by Rāhu during a lunar eclipse (30) The illustrious son of Daśaratha, Śrī Rāma, on the other hand of inconceivable firmness commanded the charioteer in the words "Let the chariot be driven fast." (31) Śrī Rāma commanded the celebrated charioteer in the words "Move on !" and the people (following the chariot) likewise said to him, "Stop !" Urged (both ways) on the road, the charioteer (however) could do neither, (32) The dust raised on the road (even) as the mighty-armed Śrī Rāma drove out (of the city for the forest) settled down due to the tears that fell (from the eyes) of the citizens (following at his heels). (33) Full of lamentation and tears and (therefore) doleful (in appearance) at the departure of Śrī Rāma, the citizens (of Ayodhya), who were stricken with deep agony and commenced wailing loudly, became unconscious. (34) Tears born of agony (caused by separation from Śrī Rāma) flowed from the eyes of women like (drops of) water from lotuses shaken by the commotion of fish. (35)

दृष्ट्वा तु नृपतिः श्रीमानेकचित्तगतं पुरम् । निपपातैव दुःखेन कृत्तमूल इव द्रुमः ॥ ३६ ॥
ततो हलहलाशब्दो जज्ञे रामस्य पृष्ठतः । नराणां प्रेक्ष्य राजानं सीदन्तं भृशदुःखितम् ॥ ३७ ॥
हा रामेति जनाः केचिद् राममातेति चापरे । अन्तःपुरसमृद्धं च क्रोशन्तं पर्यदेवयन् ॥ ३८ ॥
अन्वीक्षमाणो रामस्तु विषण्णं भ्रान्तचेतसम् । राजानं मातरं चैव ददर्शानुगतौ पथि ॥ ३९ ॥
स बद्ध इव पाशेन किशोरो मातरं यथा । धर्मपाशेन संयुक्तः प्रकाशं नाभ्युदैक्षत ॥ ४० ॥
पदातिनौ च यानार्हावदुःखार्हौ सुखोचितौ । दृष्ट्वा संचोदयामास शीघ्रं याहीति सारथिम् ॥ ४१ ॥
नहि तत् पुरुषव्याघ्रो दुःखजं दर्शनं पितुः । मातुश्च सहितुं शक्तस्तोत्रैर्नुन्न इव द्विपः ॥ ४२ ॥
प्रत्यगारमिवायान्ती सवत्सा वत्सकारणात् । बद्धवत्सा यथा धेनू राममाताभ्यधावत ॥ ४३ ॥

Seeing the city reduced to singleness of mind, the glorious king for his part fell down precipitately like a tree cut at the root. (36) Perceiving the king sore distressed and suffering agony, an outcry thereupon rose from (the mouths of) men in the rear of Śrī Rāma. (37) Seeing him wailing with the inmates of his gynaeceum some people cried out, "Oh Rāma", while others exclaimed, "Oh Rāma's mother !" (38) Looking back, Śrī Rāma forthwith beheld the king, dejected and perplexed in mind, as well as his (own) mother (Kausalyā) following (him) on the road. (39) Bound by the cord of duty, he did not openly gaze on them any more than a foal,

Leaving Ayodhya for the Forest

caught in a snare would look at its dam. (40) Seeing them walking, though worthy of a chariot, unworthy of suffering and deserving of comfort, he commanded the charioteer in the words "Drive fast !" (41) (Even) as an elephant urged on with goads is unable to look behind, Śrī Rāma (a tiger among men) too was unable to bear the distressing sight of his father and mother (following him on foot). (42) Kausalyā (Śrī Rāma's mother) rushed forth (after Śrī Rāma) as a cow that has given birth to a calf and whose calf stands tied (at the stall) would run to meet it while returning to its stall (from the pasture). (43)

तथा रुदन्तीं कौसल्यां रथं तमनुधावतीम् । क्रोशन्तीं राम रामेति हा सीते लक्ष्मणेति च ॥ ४४ ॥
रामलक्ष्मणसीतार्थं स्रवन्तीं वारि नेत्रजम् । असकृत् प्रैक्षत स तां नृत्यन्तीमिव मातरम् ॥ ४५ ॥
तिष्ठेति राजा चुक्रोश याहि याहीति राघवः । सुमन्त्रस्य बभूवात्मा चक्रयोरिव चान्तरा ॥ ४६ ॥
नाश्रौषमिति राजानमुपालब्धोऽपि वक्ष्यसि । चिरं दुःखस्य पापिष्ठमिति रामस्तमब्रवीत् ॥ ४७ ॥
स रामस्य वचः कुर्वन्ननुज्ञाप्य च तं जनम् । व्रजतोऽपि हयाञ्शीघ्रं चोदयामास सारथिः ॥ ४८ ॥
न्यवर्तत जनो राज्ञो रामं कृत्वा प्रदक्षिणम् । मनसाप्याशुवेगेन न न्यवर्तत मानुषम् ॥ ४९ ॥
यमिच्छेत् पुनरायातं नैनं दूरमनुव्रजेत् । इत्यमात्या महाराजमूचुर्दशरथं वचः ॥ ५० ॥
तेषां वचः सर्वगुणोपपन्नः प्रस्विन्नगात्रः प्रविषण्णरूपः ।
निशम्य राजा कृपणः सभार्यो व्यवस्थितस्तं सुतमीक्षमाणः ॥ ५१ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे चत्वारिंशः सर्गः ॥ ४० ॥

Śrī Rāma repeatedly gazed on his aforesaid mother, Kausalyā, who was weeping as above and following that chariot as though dancing, crying "Rāma, O Rāma, Oh Sītā, O Lakṣmaṇa !" and shedding tears for the sake of Śrī Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā. (44-45) The king (on the one hand) exclaimed saying "Stop !", while Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) called out "Go on ! Proceed !!" (In this way) Sumantra's mind was placed in a dilemma as one would feel while standing between two (revolving) wheels. (46) Śrī Rāma said to him, "Even when twitted (by the king on going back to Ayodhya, for not carrying out his orders), you will say, 'I did not hear (your call).' Prolongation of this agony (caused by witnessing the sad plight of my aged and feeble parents) would prove most calamitous." (47) Carrying out the behest of Śrī Rāma and taking leave of that crowd (which was following at his heels), the aforesaid charioteer urged on the horses, that were (already) moving (ahead), to go fast. (48) (Mentally) going round Śrī Rāma clockwise the king's men returned (to the king's presence with their body, which could not keep pace with the chariot, though they accompanied Śrī Rāma with their mind to the forest); the commonalty (however) did not return even (with their body as they did not return) with their mind, which was possessed of a quick speed. (49) (On returning to the king's presence) the ministers submitted to Emperor Daśaratha as follows:—"One should not follow to a long distance him whom one wishes to see come back". (50) Hearing their submission, the king, who was endowed with all virtues and felt miserable, stopped short, gazing with his consorts, on his celebrated son (Śrī Rāma) nay, perspiring all over his body and wearing a most dejected appearance. (51)

Thus ends Canto Forty in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

एकचत्वारिंशः सर्गः

Canto XLI

The ladies of the royal gynaeceum bewail the exile of Śrī Rāma and others and the citizens of Ayodhya too are reduced to a miserable plight.

तस्मिंस्तु पुरुषव्याघ्रे निष्क्रामति कृताञ्जलौ । आर्तशब्दो हि संजज्ञे स्त्रीणामन्तःपुरे महान् ॥ १ ॥
अनाथस्य जनस्यास्य दुर्बलस्य तपस्विनः । यो गतिः शरणं चासीत् स नाथः क्व नु गच्छति ॥ २ ॥
न क्रुध्यत्यभिशस्तोऽपि क्रोधनीयानि वर्जयन् । क्रुद्धान् प्रसादयन् सर्वान् समदुःखः क्व गच्छति ॥ ३ ॥
कौसल्यायां महातेजा यथा मातरि वर्तते । तथा यो वर्ततेऽस्मासु महात्मा क्व नु गच्छति ॥ ४ ॥
कैकेय्या क्लिश्यमानेन राज्ञा संचोदितो वनम् । परित्राता जनस्यास्य जगतः क्व नु गच्छति ॥ ५ ॥
अहो निश्चेतनो राजा जीवलोकस्य संक्षयम् । धर्म्यं सत्यव्रतं रामं वनवासे प्रवत्स्यति ॥ ६ ॥
इति सर्वा महिष्यस्ता विवत्सा इव धेनवः । रुरुदुश्चैव दुःखार्ताः सस्वरं च विचुक्रुशुः ॥ ७ ॥

Even as Śrī Rāma (that tiger among men) was driving out (of Ayodhya) with joined palms, a loud plaintive cry actually burst forth from (the mouths of) the ladies in the gynaeceum. (1) (They exclaimed:) "Oh, where goes that lord, who was the refuge and protector of us helpless, weak and forlorn people ? (2) Oh, where goes the prince to whom joy and sorrow made no difference, (nay) who did not lose temper even when slandered, avoided provoking words and pacified all who were angry ? (3) Where goes the high-souled Śrī Rāma, who is endowed with exceptional glory and who behaved with us (in the same way) as he did with his own mother, Kausalyā ? (4) Oh, where goes Śrī Rāma, the protector not only of us all but even of the world, enjoined to proceed to the forest by the king, who was being tormented by Kaikeyī ? (5) How insensible is the king, who has sent into exile to the forest the virtuous Prince Rāma, who is the support of the (entire) living creation and is vowed to truthfulness !" (6) Stricken with agony all the aforesaid queens lamented in this way and cried at the top of their voice like (so many) cows bereft of their calf. (7)

स तमन्तःपुरे घोरमार्तशब्दं महीपतिः । पुत्रशोकाभिसंतप्तः श्रुत्वा चासीत् सुदुःखितः ॥ ८ ॥
नाग्निहोत्राण्यहूयन्त नापचन् गृहमेधिनः । अकुर्वन् न प्रजाः कार्यं सूर्यश्चान्तरधीयत ॥ ९ ॥
व्यसृजन् कवलान् नागा गावो वत्सान् न पाययन् । पुत्रं प्रथमजं लब्ध्वा जननी नाभ्यनन्दत ॥ १० ॥
त्रिशङ्कुर्लोहिताङ्गश्च बृहस्पतिबुधावपि । दारुणाः सोममभ्येत्य ग्रहाः सर्वे व्यवस्थिताः ॥ ११ ॥
नक्षत्राणि गतार्चींषि ग्रहाश्च गततेजसः । विशाखाश्च सधूमाश्च नभसि प्रचकाशिरे ॥ १२ ॥
कालिकानिलवेगेन महोदधिरिवोत्थितः । रामे वनं प्रव्रजिते नगरं प्रचचाल तत् ॥ १३ ॥
दिशः पर्याकुलाः सर्वास्तिमिरेणेव संवृताः । न ग्रहो नापि नक्षत्रं प्रचकाशे न किंचन ॥ १४ ॥
अकस्मान्नागरः सर्वो जनो दैन्यमुपागमत् । आहारे वा विहारे वा न कश्चिदकरोन्मनः ॥ १५ ॥

शोकपर्यायसंतप्तः सततं दीर्घमुच्छ्वसन् । अयोध्यायां जनः सर्वश्चुक्रोश जगतीपतिम् ॥ १६ ॥
बाष्पपर्याकुलमुखो राजमार्गगतो जनः । न हृष्टो लभ्यते कश्चित् सर्वः शोकपरायणः ॥ १७ ॥

Hearing that frightful plaintive cry in the gynaeceum, King Daśaratha, who was (already) tormented with grief caused by separation from his son, felt sore distressed. (8) No oblations were poured into the sacred fire (by those maintaining the sacred fire); no householders cooked food; people did not carry on their business and the sun went out of sight (even before sunset due to untimely clouds). (9) Elephants dropped grass etc. from their mouths; cows refused to give suck to their calves; mothers did not rejoice to meet their first-born son. (10) Getting conjoined (through a retrogade movement) with the moon, Triśanku and Mars, even Jupiter and Mercury and all other luminaries assumed a stern aspect. (11) The lunar mansions lost their brilliance and the planets their splendour. Proceeding on a wrong course they cast a hazy lustre in the heavens. (12) Driven by a blast of wind, a mass of clouds rose (in the sky) like a turbulent ocean. (Nay) Śrī Rāma having departed for the forest, the city of Ayodhya rocked to and fro. (13) All the (four) quarters became obscure as though enveloped in darkness. No planet nor any lunar mansion emitted the faintest light. (14) All of a sudden all the people of Ayodhya were reduced to a wretched plight. None could give his or her mind to food or recreation. (15) Tormented with recurrence of grief and sighing heavily all the time, all the people of Ayodhya cursed the emperor. (16) Men walking on the public road had their face soiled with tears. None was found merry, all were plunged in grief. (17)

न वाति पवनः शीतो न शशी सौम्यदर्शनः । न सूर्यस्तपते लोकं सर्वं पर्याकुलं जगत् ॥ १८ ॥
अनर्थिनः सुताः स्त्रीणां भर्तारो भ्रातरस्तथा । सर्वे सर्वं परित्यज्य राममेवान्वचिन्तयन् ॥ १९ ॥
ये तु रामस्य सुहृदः सर्वे ते मूढचेतसः । शोकभारेण चाक्रान्ताः शयनं नैव भेजिरे ॥ २० ॥
ततस्त्वयोध्या रहिता महात्मना पुरंदरेणेव मही सपर्वता ।
चचाल घोरं भयशोकदीपिता सनागयोधाश्वगणा ननाद च ॥ २१ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे एकचत्वारिंशः सर्गः ॥ ४१ ॥

No cool breeze blew nor did the moon present a placid appearance, nor again did the sun warm the people (with its rays). The whole world was disturbed in mind. (18) Sons were indifferent to their mothers, husbands were of no use to their wives and brothers had no use for their brothers. Abandoning everything (else) all focussed their thought on Śrī Rāma alone. (19) All those, however, who were friends of Śrī Rāma were perplexed in mind and had no sleep, overwhelmed as they were with excess of grief. (20) Excited through fear and grief, the city of Ayodhya, bereft of Śrī Rāma (the high-souled prince), was thereupon violently disturbed,—(even) as the earth along with its mountains rocks to and fro when bereft of Indra (the destroyer of strongholds),—and cried with its elephants, warriors and horses. (21)

Thus ends Canto Forty-one in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

द्विचत्वारिंशः सर्गः

Canto XLII

Śrī Rāma having departed for the forest in an exceptionally swift-going chariot, Daśaratha vainly seeks to cover the intervening distance on foot. The very dust raised by the chariot having disappeared after a while, the emperor feels doubly disconsolate and drops to the ground. When Kaikeyī comes forward to support him he scolds her and asks her not to touch his person. Kausalyā then lifts him up and persuades him to return. His personal attendants take him to the latter's apartments and, seeing him plunged in grief, Kausalyā seats herself beside him and begins to lament in various ways.

यावत् तु निर्यतस्तस्य रजोरूपमदृश्यत । नैवेक्ष्वाकुवरस्तावत् संजहारात्मचक्षुषी ॥ १ ॥
यावद् राजा प्रियं पुत्रं पश्यत्यत्यन्तधार्मिकम् । तावद् व्यवर्धतेवास्य धरण्यां पुत्रदर्शने ॥ २ ॥
न पश्यति रजोऽप्यस्य यदा रामस्य भूमिपः । तदाऽऽर्तश्च विषण्णश्च पपात धरणीतले ॥ ३ ॥
तस्य दक्षिणमन्वागात् कौसल्या बाहुमङ्गना । परं चास्यान्वगात् पार्श्वं कैकेयी सा सुमध्यमा ॥ ४ ॥
तां नयेन च सम्पन्नो धर्मेण विनयेन च । उवाच राजा कैकेयीं समीक्ष्य व्यथितेन्द्रियः ॥ ५ ॥

So long, however, as the clouds of the dust that followed Śrī Rāma (even) as he was going out (to the forest) could be seen Daśaratha (the foremost of the Ikṣwākus) did not turn his eyes away (from them). (1) So long as the king saw his beloved and most virtuous son (in the form of the dust raised by his chariot) his body stood on the ground growing in size as it were (to be able) to catch a glimpse of his (gradually receding) son. (2) The moment (however) the king ceased to behold even the dust of (the chariot of) the said Śrī Rāma, he dropped to the ground afflicted and dejected. (3) His (seniormost) wife, Kausalyā, approached his right arm (in order to lift him up by that arm), while the notorious Kaikeyī of charming limbs went up to his other (left) side. (4) Distressed in mind to behold Kaikeyī, the king, who was richly endowed with prudence, as well as with piety and culture, spoke to her (as follows):—(5)

कैकेयि मामकाङ्गानि मा स्प्राक्षीः पापनिश्चये । नहि त्वां द्रष्टुमिच्छामि न भार्या न च बान्धवी ॥ ६ ॥
ये च त्वामनुजीवन्ति नाहं तेषां न ते मम । केवलार्थपरां हि त्वां त्यक्तधर्मां त्यजाम्यहम् ॥ ७ ॥
अगृह्णां यच्च ते पाणिमग्निं पर्यणयं च यत् । अनुजानामि तत् सर्वमस्मिंल्लोके परत्र च ॥ ८ ॥
भरतश्चेत् प्रतीतः स्याद् राज्यं प्राप्यैतदव्ययम् । यन्मे स दद्यात् पित्रर्थं मा मां तद्दत्तमागमत् ॥ ९ ॥
अथ रेणुसमुद्ध्वस्तं समुत्थाप्य नराधिपम् । न्यवर्तत तदा देवी कौसल्या शोककर्शिता ॥ १० ॥
हत्वेव ब्राह्मणं कामात् स्पृष्ट्वाग्निमिव पाणिना । अन्वतप्यत धर्मात्मा पुत्रं संचिन्त्य राघवम् ॥ ११ ॥

निवृत्यैव निवृत्यैव सीदतो रथवर्त्मसु । राज्ञो नातिबभौ रूपं ग्रस्तस्यांशुमतो यथा ॥ १२ ॥
विललाप स दुःखार्तः प्रियं पुत्रमनुस्मरन् । नगरान्तमनुप्राप्तं बुद्ध्वा पुत्रमथाब्रवीत् ॥ १३ ॥

"O Kaikeyī of sinful resolve, (pray) do not touch my limbs, really I do not wish to see you; you are neither my wedded wife nor my relation. (6) (Nay) I am no longer the master of those who depend for their subsistence on you nor are they my servants any more. I disown you, who are solely devoted to your selfish ends and have forsaken virtue. (7) I (hereby) disclaim all the benefits that will accrue to me (hereafter) in this world and the next from the fact that I clasped your hand (in marriage) and took you round the fire (with me). (8) If Bharata gets delighted to receive this sovereignty free from hindrance, let not that which he offers to me (after my death) by way of obsequial oblations intended for his departed ancestors reach me (in the other world).'' (9) Forthwith lifting up the king, who was soiled with dust (due to his having toppled down), Queen Kausalyā, who had been emaciated through grief, then returned (to the palace with the king). (10) Thinking deeply of his son, Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu), Daśaratha (of pious mind) gave way to repentance (for having sent him into exile under pressure from Kaikeyī), even as one is stung with remorse on having voluntarily killed a Brahman or on touching a (blazing) fire with one's own hand. (11) The appearance of the king, who, turning back again and again, exerted himself to gaze on the path which the chariot (of Śrī Rāma) had taken, did not look charming any more than the orb of the sun in eclipse. (12) Thinking all the time of his beloved son (Śrī Rāma), he lamented, stricken with agony as he was. Coming to know of his son having reached the outskirts of the city, he then spoke (as follows):—(13)

वाहनानां च मुख्यानां वहतां तं ममात्मजम् । पदानि पथि दृश्यन्ते स महात्मा न दृश्यते ॥ १४ ॥
यः सुखेनोपधानेषु शेते चन्दनरूषितः । वीज्यमानो महार्हाभिः स्त्रीभिर्मम सुतोत्तमः ॥ १५ ॥
स नूनं क्वचिदेवाद्य वृक्षमूलमुपाश्रितः । काष्ठं वा यदि वाश्मानमुपधाय शयिष्यते ॥ १६ ॥
उत्थास्यति च मेदिन्याः कृपणः पांसुगुण्ठितः । विनिःश्वसन् प्रस्रवणात् करेणूनामिवर्षभः ॥ १७ ॥
द्रक्ष्यन्ति नूनं पुरुषा दीर्घबाहुं वनेचराः । राममुत्थाय गच्छन्तं लोकनाथमनाथवत् ॥ १८ ॥
सा नूनं जनकस्येष्टा सुता सुखसदोचिता । कण्टकाक्रमणक्लान्ता वनमद्य गमिष्यति ॥ १९ ॥
अनभिज्ञा वनानां सा नूनं भयमुपैष्यति । श्वपदानर्दितं श्रुत्वा गम्भीरं रोमहर्षणम् ॥ २० ॥
सकामा भव कैकेयि विधवा राज्यमावस । नहि तं पुरुषव्याघ्रं विना जीवितुमुत्सहे ॥ २१ ॥

"The marks of the hoofs of the excellent horses drawing the chariot of my celebrated son are (no doubt) seen on the road, but that high-souled prince is no longer seen. (14) That jewel among my sons, who, having been smeared (all over) with sandal-paste, used to repose comfortably on cushions and pillows, while being fanned by women possessed of great comeliness and adorned with costly jewels will surely lie down today at some unknown place at the foot of a tree resting his head on a block of wood or stone ! (15-16) (Nay, at the close of night) he will rise from the (bare) ground in a wretched condition, enveloped in dust and exhaling audibly like a leader of elephants rising from beside a spring. (17) Undoubtedly people living in the forest will behold Rāma, the protector of the world, who is possessed of long arms, rising (from sleep in the forest) and going forth like one forlorn.

(18) That beloved daughter of Janaka, who is ever worthy of (all kinds of) amenities, will surely walk today to the forest (barefooted and therefore) injured by treading on thorns. (19) Unacquainted (as she is) with the woods, she will doubtless be struck with fear to hear the deep and thrilling roar of beasts of prey. (20) Having your wishes fulfilled, O Kaikeyī, enjoy the kingdom as a widow. I am unable to live without that tiger among men." (21)

इत्येवं विलपन् राजा जनौघेनाभिसंवृतः । अपस्नात इवारिष्टं प्रविवेश गृहोत्तमम् ॥ २२ ॥
शून्यचत्वरवेश्मान्तां संवृतापणवेदिकाम् । क्लान्तदुर्बलदुःखार्तां नात्याकीर्णमहापथाम् ॥ २३ ॥
तामवेक्ष्य पुरीं सर्वां राममेवानुचिन्तयन् । विलपन् प्राविशद् राजा गृहं सूर्य इवाम्बुदम् ॥ २४ ॥
महाह्रदमिवाक्षोभ्यं सुपर्णेन हृतोरगम् । रामेण रहितं वेश्म वैदेह्या लक्ष्मणेन च ॥ २५ ॥
अथ गद्गदशब्दस्तु विलपन् वसुधाधिपः । उवाच मृदु मन्दार्थं वचनं दीनमस्वरम् ॥ २६ ॥
कौसल्याया गृहं शीघ्रं राममातुर्नयन्तु माम् । न ह्यन्यत्र ममाश्वासो हृदयस्य भविष्यति ॥ २७ ॥
इति ब्रुवन्तं राजानमनयन् द्वारदर्शिनः । कौसल्याया गृहं तत्र न्यवेश्यत विनीतवत् ॥ २८ ॥

Lamenting as aforesaid, and surrounded on all sides by a multitude of men, the king entered his excellent abode, which was full of sorrow, like one who has bathed on the death of a relation. (22) Perceiving the entire city of Ayodhya with its cross roads and portals deserted and the sheds in front of shops (where merchandise was spread) closed, its people depressed in spirits, feeble and afflicted and its highways not very crowded, the king entered his palace wailing and thinking all the time of Śrī Rāma alone, (even) as the sun enters a cloud. (23-24) Bereft of Śrī Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa, the palace looked like a big pool rendered imperturbable due to its snakes having been carried away by Garuḍa. (25) The lamenting emperor then spoke (to the porters) in faltering, soft, pitiful and indistinct words, which were (also) not clearly intelligible (as follows):—(26) "Take me speedily to the apartments of Kausalyā, the mother of Rāma; for nowhere else will my heart find solace." (27) The porters took the king, who was speaking as aforesaid, to the apartments of Kausalyā and there he was gently laid (by them on a couch). (28)

ततस्तत्र प्रविष्टस्य कौसल्याया निवेशनम् । अधिरुह्यापि शयनं बभूव लुलितं मनः ॥ २९ ॥
पुत्रद्वयविहीनं च स्नुषया च विवर्जितम् । अपश्यद् भवनं राजा नष्टचन्द्रमिवाम्बरम् ॥ ३० ॥
तच्च दृष्ट्वा महाराजो भुजमुद्यम्य वीर्यवान् । उच्चैःस्वरेण प्राक्रोशद्धा राम विजहासि नौ ॥ ३१ ॥
सुखिता बत तं कालं जीविष्यन्ति नरोत्तमाः । परिष्वजन्तो ये रामं द्रक्ष्यन्ति पुनरागतम् ॥ ३२ ॥
अथ रात्र्यां प्रपन्नायां कालरात्र्यामिवात्मनः । अर्धरात्रे दशरथः कौसल्यामिदमब्रवीत् ॥ ३३ ॥
न त्वा पश्यामि कौसल्ये साधु मां पाणिना स्पृश । रामं मेऽनुगता दृष्टिरद्यापि न निवर्तते ॥ ३४ ॥
तं राममेवानुविचिन्तयन्तं समीक्ष्य देवी शयने नरेन्द्रम् ।
उपोपविश्याधिकमार्तरूपा विनिःश्वसन्तं विललाप कृच्छ्रम् ॥ ३५ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे द्विचत्वारिंशः सर्गः ॥ ४२ ॥

The mind of the king, even though he had entered Kausalyā's apartments and had been laid on a couch, continued to be restless. (29) The king found the palace, which was bereft of his two sons and destitute of his daughter-in-

law, devoid of charm as the sky without the moon (and the stars). (30) Looking at the palace and lifting up his arm, the powerful emperor cried in a loud voice:—"Oh Rāma, are you (really) deserting us both (your mother as well as myself) ? (31) Alas, those jewels among men alone who will survive the term of Rāma's exile and (are eventually able to) see him come back, clasping him to their bosom, will be (really) happy !" (32) Now when the night arrived,—the night which was as it were the night of Dissolution for him,—King Daśaratha spoke at midnight to Kausalyā as follows·—(33) "Kausalyā, I am unable to see you. (Please) touch me with your hand well. Having followed Rāma, my sight has not yet returned." (34) Perceiving the aforesaid monarch on the couch,—who was thinking deeply all the time of Śrī Rāma alone and breathing hard with difficulty,—and sitting by his side, the queen (Kausalyā), who wore a distressed look (about her), began to wail. (35)

Thus ends Canto Forty-two in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

त्रिचत्वारिंशः सर्गः

Canto XLIII

The Lament of Kausalyā

ततः समीक्ष्य शयने सन्नं शोकेन पार्थिवम् । कौसल्या पुत्रशोकार्ता तमुवाच महीपतिम् ॥ १ ॥
राघवे नरशार्दूले विषं मुक्त्वाहिजिह्मगा । विचरिष्यति कैकेयी निर्मुक्तेव हि पन्नगी ॥ २ ॥
विवास्य रामं सुभगा लब्धकामा समाहिता । त्रासयिष्यति मां भूयो दुष्टाहिरिव वेश्मनि ॥ ३ ॥
अथास्मिन् नगरे रामश्चरन् भैक्षं गृहे वसेत् । कामकारो वरं दातुमपि दासं ममात्मजम् ॥ ४ ॥
पातयित्वा तु कैकेय्या रामं स्थानाद् यथेष्टतः । प्रविद्धो रक्षसां भागः पर्वणीवाहिताग्निना ॥ ५ ॥
नागराजगतिर्वीरो महाबाहुर्धनुर्धरः । वनमाविशते नूनं सभार्यः सहलक्ष्मणः ॥ ६ ॥
वने त्वदृष्टदुःखानां कैकेय्यनुमते त्वया । त्यक्तानां वनवासाय कान्यावस्था भविष्यति ॥ ७ ॥

Perceiving the king lying on the couch stricken with grief, Kausalyā, who was feeling distressed due to grief on account of separation from her son (Śrī Rāma), spoke to the said king (as follows):—(1) "Having discharged her poison on Rāma (a scion of Raghu), a tiger among men, indeed, Kaikeyī of crooked ways will surely wander about freely like a female serpent that has cast off its slough. (2) Having exiled Rāma and (thereby) achieved her desired end, Kaikeyī, whose stars are propitious and whose mind is at rest (now), will further cause fear to me (undisturbed) like a wicked serpent dwelling in one's own house. (3) Even if Rāma were allowed to remain at his home in Ayodhya living on alms, it would be preferable (to me in comparison to his exile). (Nay), it would be better even to consign my son to her as a slave. (4) Having wantonly thrown Rāma out of his position, Kaikeyī has acted in the same way as an oblation (intended for the gods) may be consigned to ogres on a new or full moon by one who tends the sacred fire. (5) Accompanied by his wife and Lakṣmaṇa and walking like a king of elephants, bow in hand, the mighty-armed hero will have surely entered the forest (by now). (6) In a forest what other

fate (than the hardships of forest life) can befall the youths, who had never known suffering (before) and who have been consigned by you to a forest life following the wishes of Kaikeyī ? (7)

ते रत्नहीनास्तरुणाः फलकाले विवासिताः । कथं वत्स्यन्ति कृपणाः फलमूलैः कृताशनाः ॥ ८ ॥
अपीदानीं स कालः स्यान्मम शोकक्षयः शिवः । सहभार्यं सह भ्रात्रा पश्येयमिह राघवम् ॥ ९ ॥
श्रुत्वैवोपस्थितौ वीरौ कदायोध्या भविष्यति । यशस्विनी हृष्टजना सूच्छ्रितध्वजमालिनी ॥ १० ॥
कदा प्रेक्ष्य नरव्याघ्रावरण्यात् पुनरागतौ । भविष्यति पुरी हृष्टा समुद्र इव पर्वणि ॥ ११ ॥
कदायोध्यां महाबाहुः पुरीं वीरः प्रवेक्ष्यति । पुरस्कृत्य रथे सीतां वृषभो गोवधूमिव ॥ १२ ॥
कदा प्राणिसहस्राणि राजमार्गे ममात्मजौ । लाजैरवकरिष्यन्ति प्रविशन्तावरिंदमौ ॥ १३ ॥
प्रविशन्तौ कदायोध्यां द्रक्ष्यामि शुभकुण्डलौ । उदग्रायुधनिस्त्रिंशौ सशृङ्गाविव पर्वतौ ॥ १४ ॥
कदा सुमनसः कन्याद्विजातीनां फलानि च । प्रदिशन्तः पुरीं हृष्टाः करिष्यन्ति प्रदक्षिणम् ॥ १५ ॥
कदा परिणतो बुद्ध्या वयसा चामरप्रभः । अभ्युपैष्यति धर्मात्मा सुवर्ष इव लालयन् ॥ १६ ॥

"Exiled at a time when they should have (in the ordinary circumstances) enjoyed the fruits (amenities) of life, how shall the poor youths, who have been deprived of (all) precious things, drag their existence living on fruits and roots ? (8) Will that happy time, marked with the end of my grief, ever come, when I shall (be able to) see Rāma (a scion of Raghu) accompanied by his wife and (younger) brother back in Ayodhya ? (9) When will Ayodhya regain her (pristine) glory, throb with joyous crowds and be adorned (once more) with rows of towering banners the moment it hears of the two heroic princes (Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa) being present ? (10) When will the city wax jubilant (again) like an ocean on a full moon (night) to perceive the two princes, who are (really) tigers among men, come back from the forest ? (11) When will the mighty-armed hero (Śrī Rāma) enter (again) the city of Ayodhya placing Sītā at his head in the chariot, (even) as a bull would follow a cow ? (12) When will thousands of men cover with parched grains of paddy on the public road my two sons (Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa), the subduers of their enemy, entering the city ? (13) When shall I (be able to) see the two princes, adorned with splendid ear-rings and armed with excellent bows and swords, entering Ayodhya like a pair of mountains crowned with peaks ? (14) When will the three darlings merrily go round the city clockwise, receiving on the way flowers from the hands of virgins and fruits from those of Brahmans ? (15) When will the pious Rāma, grown ripe in intellect and shining like a god in point of age (eternal youth), return fostering the world like a good (timely) shower ? (16)

निस्संशयं मया मन्ये पुरा वीर कदर्यया । पातुकामेषु वत्सेषु मातॄणां शातिताः स्तनाः ॥ १७ ॥
साहं गौरिव सिंहेन विवत्सा वत्सला कृता । कैकेय्या पुरुषव्याघ्र बालवत्सेव गौर्बलात् ॥ १८ ॥
नहि तावद् गुणैर्जुष्टं सर्वशास्त्रविशारदम् । एकपुत्रा विना पुत्रमहं जीवितुमुत्सहे ॥ १९ ॥
न हि मे जीविते किंचित् सामर्थ्यमिह कल्प्यते । अपश्यन्त्याः प्रियं पुत्रं लक्ष्मणं च महाबलम् ॥ २० ॥
अयं हि मां दीपयतेऽद्य वह्निस्तनूजशोकप्रभवो महाहितः ।
महीमिमां रश्मिभिरुत्तमप्रभो यथा निदाघे भगवान् दिवाकरः ॥ २१ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे त्रिचत्वारिंशः सर्गः ॥ ४३ ॥

"Undoubtedly in some past life, I believe, O valiant king, the teats of cows were cut off by me, mean-minded as I was, while their calves stood waiting to suck them. (17) Fond of my child like a cow, O tiger among men, I have for this (very) reason been forcibly deprived of my child by Kaikeyī in the same way as a cow having a calf of tender age may be deprived of her calf by a lion. (18) Having only one son, I am surely unable to survive without that son, who is endowed with all virtues and is well-versed in all the scriptures. (19) There is not the least capacity in me to sustain my life here so long as I fail to perceive my beloved son (Rāma) and Lakṣmaṇa, who is possessed of great strength. (20) This fire, born of grief occasioned by separation from my son, which is exceedingly harmful to me sure enough, is torturing me today in the same way as the glorious sun, possessed of greatest splendour, scorches this earth with its rays in summer." (21)

Thus ends Canto Forty-three in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

चतुश्चत्वारिंशः सर्गः

Canto XLIV

Establishing the greatness of Śrī Rāma, Sumitrā, who is a pastmaster in eloquence, assuages Kausalyā's grief.

विलपन्तीं तथा तां तु कौसल्यां प्रमदोत्तमाम् । इदं धर्मे स्थिता धर्म्यं सुमित्रा वाक्यमब्रवीत् ॥ १ ॥
तवार्ये सद्गुणैर्युक्तः स पुत्रः पुरुषोत्तमः । किं ते विलपितेनैवं कृपणं रुदितेन वा ॥ २ ॥
यस्तवार्ये गतः पुत्रस्त्यक्त्वा राज्यं महाबलः । साधु कुर्वन् महात्मानं पितरं सत्यवादिनम् ॥ ३ ॥
शिष्टैराचरिते सम्यक् शश्वत् प्रेत्य फलोदये । रामो धर्मे स्थितः श्रेष्ठो न स शोच्यः कदाचन ॥ ४ ॥
वर्तते चोत्तमां वृत्तिं लक्ष्मणोऽस्मिन् सदानघः । दयावान् सर्वभूतेषु लाभस्तस्य महात्मनः ॥ ५ ॥
अरण्यवासे यद् दुःखं जानन्त्येव सुखोचिता । अनुगच्छति वैदेही धर्मात्मानं तवात्मजम् ॥ ६ ॥
कीर्तिभूतां पताकां यो लोके भ्रमयति प्रभुः । धर्मः सत्यव्रतपरः किं न प्राप्तस्तवात्मजः ॥ ७ ॥

Sumitrā, who was devoted to righteousness, addressed for her part the following words, which were in consonance with the spirit of righteousness, to the celebrated Kausalyā, the foremost of women, who had been wailing as aforesaid.—(1) "That son of yours, O noble lady, is adorned with excellent virtues and is the foremost among men. What purpose will be served by your wailing in this way or by weeping piteously ? (2) Your noblest son, Rāma, who is possessed of great strength, O noble lady, and who, having renounced the throne, has proceeded to the forest, (thereby) proving his high-souled father to be perfectly truthful, is devoted to the path of virtue, which has been eternally and duly followed by the cultured and which brings its reward in the other world. (As such) he never deserves to be pitied. (3-4) The sinless Lakṣmaṇa, who is full of compassion to all created beings, always renders the best form of service to Rāma. (Thus) there is gain (alone) to that high-souled prince. (5) The daughter of the ruler of the Videhas (too), who is worthy of (all) comfort, is following your pious-minded son, even though aware of the suffering

attendant upon forest life. (6) What blessing has not been secured by your powerful son, who is all virtue and is pledged to the vow of truthfulness, and the banner of whose fame flutters throughout the world ? (7)

व्यक्तं रामस्य विज्ञाय शौचं माहात्म्यमुत्तमम् । न गात्रमंशुभिः सूर्यः संतापयितुमर्हति ॥ ८ ॥
शिवः सर्वेषु कालेषु काननेभ्यो विनिस्सृतः । राघवं युक्तशीतोष्णः सेविष्यति सुखोऽनिलः ॥ ९ ॥
शयानमनघं रात्रौ पितेवाभिपरिष्वजन् । घर्मघ्नः संस्पृशञ्छीतश्चन्द्रमा ह्लादयिष्यति ॥ १० ॥
ददौ चास्त्राणि दिव्यानि यस्मै ब्रह्मा महौजसे । दानवेन्द्रं हतं दृष्ट्वा तिमिध्वजसुतं रणे ॥ ११ ॥
स शूरः पुरुषव्याघ्रः स्वबाहुबलमाश्रितः । असंत्रस्तो ह्यरण्येऽसौ वेश्मनीव निवत्स्यते ॥ १२ ॥
यस्येषुपथमासाद्य विनाशं यान्ति शत्रवः । कथं न पृथिवी तस्य शासने स्थातुमर्हति ॥ १३ ॥
या श्रीः शौर्यं च रामस्य या च कल्याणसत्त्वता । निवृत्तारण्यवासः स्वं क्षिप्रं राज्यमवाप्स्यति ॥ १४ ॥

"Fully aware of the purity, which is (so) well known, as well as of the great magnanimity of Rāma, the sun ought not to scorch his person by its rays. (8) A favourable and delightful breeze of moderate heat and cold, blowing from the woods at all times, will render service to Rāma. (9) Gently stroking him (with its rays) when he is reposing at night, and hugging him like a father, and driving away the heat (of the day), the cool moon will exhilarate the sinless Rāma. (10) Relying solely on the might of his arms, that heroic prince, a (veritable) tiger among men,—on whom, endowed with great strength, Sage Viśwāmitra (a Brahman who vied with Brahmā in creating a world of his own) bestowed celestial missiles on seeing the demon Subāhu (son of Śambara, whose banner bore the device of a large fish), the chief of demons, killed on the battle-field (by Rāma),—will surely dwell undaunted in the forest as in his own palace. (11-12) How can the earth fail to obey the command of Rāma, to whose shafts the enemies fall an easy prey ? (13) The splendour that invests Śrī Rāma, the valour that is natural to him and the beneficent strength that resides in him lead one to believe that when the term of his exile in the forest has concluded he will speedily regain his throne. (14)

सूर्यस्यापि भवेत् सूर्यो ह्यग्नेरग्निः प्रभोः प्रभुः । श्रियाः श्रीश्च भवेदग्र्या कीर्त्याः कीर्तिः क्षमाक्षमा ॥ १५ ॥
दैवतं देवतानां च भूतानां भूतसत्तमः । तस्य के ह्यगुणा देवि वने वाप्यथवा पुरे ॥ १६ ॥
पृथिव्या स ह वैदेह्या श्रिया च पुरुषर्षभः । क्षिप्रं तिसृभिरेताभिः सह रामोऽभिषेक्ष्यते ॥ १७ ॥
दुःखजं विसृजत्यश्रु निष्क्रामन्तमुदीक्ष्य यम् । अयोध्यायां जनः सर्वः शोकवेगसमाहितः ॥ १८ ॥
कुशचीरधरं वीरं गच्छन्तमपराजितम् । सीतेवानुगता लक्ष्मीस्तस्य किं नाम दुर्लभम् ॥ १९ ॥
धनुर्ग्रहवरो यस्य बाणखड्गास्त्रभृत् स्वयम् । लक्ष्मणो व्रजति ह्यग्रे तस्य किं नाम दुर्लभम् ॥ २० ॥
निवृत्तवनवासं तं द्रष्टासि पुनरागतम् । जहि शोकं च मोहं च देवि सत्यं ब्रवीमि ते ॥ २१ ॥
शिरसा चरणावेतौ वन्दमानमनिन्दिते । पुनर्द्रक्ष्यसि कल्याणि पुत्रं चन्द्रमिवोदितम् ॥ २२ ॥
पुनः प्रविष्टं दृष्ट्वा तमभिषिक्तं महाश्रियम् । समुत्स्रक्ष्यसि नेत्राभ्यां शीघ्रमानन्दजं जलम् ॥ २३ ॥
मा शोको देवि दुःखं वा न रामे दृश्यतेऽशिवम् । क्षिप्रं द्रक्ष्यसि पुत्रं त्वं ससीतं सहलक्ष्मणम् ॥ २४ ॥

"Indeed he is the illuminator of the sun (which illumines the whole universe), the fire (revealer) of fire, the ruler of rulers, the foremost splendour of splendour, the glory (essence) of glory and the forbearance

(the sustaining power) of forbearance. (15) Nay, he is the god (adored) of gods, the foremost being of all beings. Indeed what handicaps can there be for him in the forest or in Ayodhya, O queen ? (16) Assuredly the aforesaid Rāma, a jewel among men, will soon be installed on the throne along with the following three, *viz*, Mother Earth (a Consort of Lord Viṣṇu), Sītā (a princess of the Videha kingdom) and Śrī (the Goddess of Fortune, another Consort of Lord Viṣṇu, whom Rāma represents). (17) Perceiving him departing (from Ayodhya), all the people in Ayodhya shed tears of agony, smitten as they were with an upsurge of grief. (18) (Nay) Sītā, who is a compeer of Lakṣmī, followed the invincible hero (even) as he departed (for the forest) clad in a garment of the sacred Kuśa grass. Indeed what can be difficult to obtain for him ? (19) In fact, what can be hard to obtain for him at whose head indeed walks Lakṣmaṇa himself, the foremost of bowmen, wielding a sword, arrows and (other) missiles ? (20) O queen, I tell you the truth: you will (be able to) see Rāma come back (to Ayodhya) on having concluded the term of his exile in the forest. (Pray) abandon grief and infatuation. (21) You will again see your son,—as one sees the rising moon,—saluting these feet (of yours) with his head bent low, O blessed and irreproachable lady ! (22) Seeing him (returned to the palace) and installed on the throne and invested with extraordinary splendour you will soon (begin to) shed tears of joy in profusion. (23) Let there be no grief nor sorrow (with regard to Rāma), O queen; (for) no ill luck is seen in Rāma. (Nay) you will soon behold your son accompanied by Sītā and by Lakṣmaṇa. (24)

त्वयाशेषो जनश्चायं समाश्वास्यो यतोऽनघे । किमिदानीमिदं देवि करोषि हृदि विक्लवम् ॥ २५ ॥
नार्हा त्वं शोचितुं देवि यस्यास्ते राघवः सुतः । नहि रामात् परो लोके विद्यते सत्पथे स्थितः ॥ २६ ॥
अभिवादयमानं तं दृष्ट्वा ससुहृदं सुतम् । मुदाश्रु मोक्ष्यसे क्षिप्रं मेघरेखेव वार्षिकी ॥ २७ ॥
पुत्रस्ते वरदः क्षिप्रमयोध्यां पुनरागतः । कराभ्यां मृदुपीनाभ्यां चरणौ पीडयिष्यति ॥ २८ ॥
अभिवाद्य नमस्यन्तं शूरं ससुहृदं सुतम् । मुदास्रैः प्रोक्षसे पुत्रं मेघराजिरिवाचलम् ॥ २९ ॥

आश्वासयन्ती विविधैश्च वाक्यैर्वाक्योपचारे कुशलानवद्या ।
रामस्य तां मातरमेवमुक्त्वा देवी सुमित्रा विरराम रामा ॥ ३० ॥
निशम्य तल्लक्ष्मणमातृवाक्यं रामस्य मातुर्नरदेवपत्न्याः ।
सद्यः शरीरे विननाश शोकः शरद्गतो मेघ इवाल्पतोयः ॥ ३१ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे चतुश्चत्वारिंशः सर्गः ॥ ४४ ॥

"Since all these people (stricken with agony caused by separation from Rāma) too deserve to be comforted by you, O sinless one, why do you harbour such grief in your heart at this moment, O godly lady ? (25) You, O queen, whose son is Rāma (a scion of Raghu), ought not to grieve; for none is more devoted to the right path in the world than Rāma. (26) Seeing your aforesaid son greeting you with his friends, you will at once begin to shed tears through joy in the same way as a mass of monsoon clouds would pour rain. (27) Returned soon to Ayodhya, your son, who is capable of bestowing boons, will press your feet with his tender and fleshy hands. (28) Seeing your valiant son saluting you with his friends after accosting you with reverence, you will bathe him in

tears shed through joy (even) as a mass of clouds would drench a mountain." (29). Having spoken to Śrī Rāma's celebrated mother as aforesaid, the charming and faultless Queen Sumitrā, who was a pastmaster in eloquence and was busy consoling her through various modes of expression, became silent. (30) On hearing that speech of Sumitrā (Lakṣmaṇa's mother) the grief that had repercussions on the body of Queen Kausalyā, the mother of Śrī Rāma, quickly disappeared like an autumnal cloud containing meagre water. (31)

Thus ends Canto Forty-four in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

पञ्चचत्वारिंशः सर्गः

Canto XLV

When the citizens that followed Śrī Rāma in his journey to the forest refuse to return even when requested by Śrī Rāma in many ways, unable as they were to bear separation from him, Śrī Rāma with Sitā and Lakṣmaṇa gets down from his chariot and begins to walk. The citizens try to deflect him from his course and persuade him to return, but in vain. At the close of the day they all reach the bank of the Tamasā.

अनुरक्ता महात्मानं रामं सत्यपराक्रमम् । अनुजग्मुः प्रयान्तं तं वनवासाय मानवाः ॥ १ ॥
निवर्तितेऽतीव बलात् सुहृद्धर्मेण राजनि । नैव ते संन्यवर्तन्त रामस्यानुगता रथम् ॥ २ ॥
अयोध्यानिलयानां हि पुरुषाणां महायशाः । बभूव गुणसम्पन्नः पूर्णचन्द्र इव प्रियः ॥ ३ ॥
स याच्यमानः काकुत्स्थस्ताभिः प्रकृतिभिस्तदा । कुर्वाणः पितरं सत्यं वनमेवान्वपद्यत ॥ ४ ॥
अवेक्षमाणः सस्नेहं चक्षुषा प्रपिबन्निव । उवाच रामः सस्नेहं ताः प्रजाः स्वाः प्रजा इव ॥ ५ ॥
या प्रीतिर्बहुमानश्च मय्ययोध्यानिवासिनाम् । मत्प्रियार्थं विशेषेण भरते सा विधीयताम् ॥ ६ ॥
स हि कल्याणचारित्रः कैकेय्यानन्दवर्धनः । करिष्यति यथावद् वः प्रियाणि च हितानि च ॥ ७ ॥
ज्ञानवृद्धो वयोबालो मृदुर्वीर्यगुणान्वितः । अनुरूपः स वो भर्ता भविष्यति भयापहः ॥ ८ ॥
स हि राजगुणैर्युक्तो युवराजः समीक्षितः । अपि चापि मया शिष्टैः कार्यं वो भर्तृशासनम् ॥ ९ ॥
न संतप्येद् यथा चासौ वनवासं गते मयि । महाराजस्तथा कार्यो मम प्रियचिकीर्षया ॥ १० ॥

People devoted to the high-souled Śrī Rāma of unfailing prowess followed him on his way to the forest for exile. (1) Even when the king was made to return much against his will, governed as he was by the code of conduct prescribed for friends and relations (accompanying a departing friend to some distance only), they would not return on any account and continued to follow the chariot; for Śrī Rāma, who enjoyed great celebrity and was richly endowed with excellences, had become the favourite like the full moon of the people residing in Ayodhya. (2-3) Even though being implored by those (devoted) people (to return), the said Śrī Rāma (a scion of Kakutstha) pressed on to the forest only, (thereby)

proving his father to be true (to his word). (4) Fondly gazing on those people as though drinking them with his eyes, Śrī Rāma lovingly spoke to them (as follows) as though they were his own children:—(5) "The love and high esteem that has been bestowed upon me by you (the inhabitants of Ayodhya) may for my pleasure be bestowed in a special measure on Bharata. (6) For, Bharata, who enhances the delight of Kaikeyī and who is possessed of an excellent conduct will properly do things which are not only pleasing but conducive to your (best) interests too. (7) Elderly in wisdom, though juvenile in age, tender though adorned with heroic qualities, he will prove to be a worthy master and will dispel your fears. (8) Endowed as he is with kingly virtues, he has been thought fit to be the Prince Regent. For this reason too the behest of your master must be carried out by you and also because you are enjoined by me. (9) Moreover, with intent to oblige me, the said emperor should be treated by you in such a way that he may not suffer agony when I have gone into exile to the forest." (10)

यथा यथा दाशरथिर्धर्ममेवाश्रितो भवेत् । तथा तथा प्रकृतयो रामं पतिमकामयन् ॥ ११ ॥
बाष्पेण पिहितं दीनं रामः सौमित्रिणा सह । चकर्षेव गुणैर्बद्धं जनं पुरनिवासिनम् ॥ १२ ॥
ते द्विजास्त्रिविधं वृद्धा ज्ञानेन वयसौजसा । वयःप्रकम्पशिरसो दूरादूचुरिदं वचः ॥ १३ ॥
वहन्तो जवना रामं भो भो जात्यास्तुरङ्गमाः । निवर्तध्वं न गन्तव्यं हिता भवत भर्तरि ॥ १४ ॥
कर्णवन्ति हि भूतानि विशेषेण तुरंगमाः । यूयं तस्मान्निवर्तध्वं याचनां प्रतिवेदिताः ॥ १५ ॥
धर्मतः स विशुद्धात्मा वीरः शुभदृढव्रतः । उपवाह्यस्तु वो भर्ता नापवाह्यः पुराद् वनम् ॥ १६ ॥
एवमार्तप्रलापांस्तान् वृद्धान् प्रलपतो द्विजान् । अवेक्ष्य सहसा रामो रथादवततार ह ॥ १७ ॥
पद्भ्यामेव जगामाथ ससीतः सहलक्ष्मणः । संनिकृष्टपदन्यासो रामो वनपरायणः ॥ १८ ॥
द्विजातीन् हि पदातींस्तान् रामश्चारित्रवत्सलः । न शशाक घृणाचक्षुः परिमोक्तुं रथेन सः ॥ १९ ॥
गच्छन्तमेव तं दृष्ट्वा रामं सम्भ्रान्तमानसाः । ऊचुः परमसंतप्ता रामं वाक्यमिदं द्विजाः ॥ २० ॥

The more did Śrī Rāma (son of Daśaratha) hold fast to righteousness (in the form of obedience to his father's wishes) the more did the people desire him to be their ruler. (11) Śrī Rāma with Lakṣmaṇa (son of Sumitrā) drew as it were by their virtues the residents of Ayodhya,—who were afflicted and covered with tears,—as though bound with cords. (12) (Of them) such Brahmans as were senior in three ways, *viz*, in point of wisdom, age and power acquired through asceticism, and whose heads were shaking under the weight of senility, spoke from a distance as follows (unable as they were to keep pace with the chariot of Śrī Rāma):—(13) "Return, O swift steeds of excellent breed drawing the chariot conveying Śrī Rāma, and be friendly to your master (since by taking Śrī Rāma against our wishes you will be doing a disservice to him); you ought not to proceed further. (14) Indeed (all) created beings which are endowed with ears, more so horses, stand apprised of our entreaty. Therefore please return. (15) The said master of yours is exceedingly pure-minded, heroic and a man of virtuous and firm resolve. As such he justly deserves to be conveyed by you nearer the city and not to be carried away from the city to the forest." (16) Perceiving those aged Brahmans uttering such plaintive words, Śrī Rāma precipitately got down from

the chariot: so the tradition goes. (17) Taking close strides (in order to enable the aged Brahmans to overtake him), Śrī Rāma now proceeded on foot with Sītā and with Lakṣmaṇa in the direction of the forest, which constituted his final destination (without stopping or receding to meet and console the Brahmans since that would amount to a breach of the vow undertaken by him to depart for the forest). (18) For, the said Śrī Rāma, who was affectionate by disposition and had compassion in his eyes, could not send back those Brahmans walking on foot while continuing to be in the chariot himsey. (19) Perplexed in mind, nay, sore distressed to see the celebrated Śrī Rāma still pressing on, the Brahmans spoke to him as follows:– (20)

ब्राह्मण्यं कृत्स्नमेतत् त्वां ब्रह्मण्यमनुगच्छति । द्विजस्कन्धाधिरूढास्त्वामग्नयोऽप्यनुयान्त्यमी ॥ २१ ॥
वाजपेयसमुत्थानिच्छत्राण्येतानि पश्य नः । पृष्ठतोऽनुप्रयातानि मेघानिव जलात्यये ॥ २२ ॥
अनवाप्तातपत्रस्य रश्मिसंतापितस्य ते । एभिश्छायां करिष्यामः स्वैश्छत्रैर्वाजपेयकैः ॥ २३ ॥
या हि नः सततं बुद्धिर्वेदमन्त्रानुसारिणी । त्वत्कृते सा कृता वत्स वनवासानुसारिणी ॥ २४ ॥
हृदयेष्ववतिष्ठन्ते वेदा ये नः परं धनम् । वत्स्यन्त्यपि गृहेष्वेव दाराश्चारित्ररक्षिताः ॥ २५ ॥
पुनर्न निश्चयः कार्यस्त्वद्गतौ सुकृता मतिः । त्वयि धर्मव्यपेक्षे तु किं स्याद् धर्मपथे स्थितम् ॥ २६ ॥

"The whole of this Brahman community is following you, devoted (as you are) to the Brahmans. (Nay) borne on the shoulders of the Brahmans (through the medium of the two pieces of wood used for kindling the fire by attrition and the vessel intended for holding it), these sacred fires too are following them. (21) (Pray) look at these canopies* obtained by us during the performance of a Vājapeya sacrifice and following at your heels like (white) clouds appearing in autumn (marking the end of the monsoon). (22) With these canopies of ours, obtained during a Vājapeya sacrifice, we shall give shade to you, who have got no canopy and (as such) are being scorched with rays (of the sun). (23) Indeed that mind of ours, which was (heretofore) engaged in pursuing the study of Vedic texts has (now) been made to follow the course of exile to the forest for your sake, O darling ! (24) The Vedas, which constitute our supreme riches, stand preserved in our hearts (memory); and protected by their character, our consorts too will (continue to) stay in our homes alone. (We need not therefore be deterred by any anxiety on their score). (25) No decision need be taken by us (on the matter) afresh, (since) our mind is fully determined to follow you (to the forest). Yet (we should like to tell you that) in the event of your turning indifferent to piety (in the form of listening to the advice of Brahmans), what being will remain devoted to the path of virtue ? (26)

याचितो नो निवर्तस्व हंसशुक्लशिरोरुहैः । शिरोभिर्निभृताचार महीपतनपांसुलैः ॥ २७ ॥
बहूनां वितता यज्ञा द्विजानां य इहागताः । तेषां समाप्तिरायत्ता तव वत्स निवर्तने ॥ २८ ॥
भक्तिमन्तीह भूतानि जंगमाजंगमानि च । याचमानेषु तेषु त्वं भक्तिं भक्तेषु दर्शय ॥ २९ ॥
अनुगन्तुमशक्तास्त्वां मूलैरुद्धतवेगिनः । उन्नता वायुवेगेन विक्रोशन्तीव पादपाः ॥ ३० ॥
निश्चेष्टाहारसंचारा वृक्षैकस्थाननिश्रिताः । पक्षिणोऽपि प्रयाचन्ते सर्वभूतानुकम्पिनम् ॥ ३१ ॥
एवं विक्रोशतां तेषां द्विजातीनां निवर्तने । ददृशे तमसा तत्र वारयन्तीव राघवम् ॥ ३२ ॥

* It is laid down in the Vedas that he who performs a Vājapeya sacrifice must be supplied with a white canopy—श्वेतच्छत्री भवति ।

ततः सुमन्त्रोऽपि रथाद् विमुच्य श्रान्तान् हयान् सम्परिवर्त्य शीघ्रम् ।
पीतोदकांस्तोयपरिप्लुताङ्गानचारयद् वै तमसाविदूरे ॥ ३३ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे पञ्चचत्वारिंशः सर्गः ॥ ४५ ॥

"Solicited by us with our heads bent low,—heads which are covered with hair white as the down of swans and are soiled with dust as a result of their falling on the ground (in the course of our prostration to you, whom we know to be none other than Lord Viṣṇu),—(pray) turn back, O prince resolute of conduct ! (27) Sacrifices have been started by many of those Brahmans that have come here (to follow you). Their conclusion, O darling, depends on your return. (28) Nay, (all) created beings—both inanimate and animate—here are full of devotion to you. (Pray) show your affection to such devotees, who are imploring you to return (by acceding to their request). (29) Tall trees, whose power of locomotion stands completely hampered by their roots (penetrating deep into the earth) and which are (therefore) unable to follow you, are crying as it were through the creaking sound produced by the force of wind (and thus asking you to return). (30) Birds too, which sit motionless and are unable to go out in search of food and which remain fixed to one spot on (the boughs of) trees, solicit you to return, compassionate as you are to all created beings." (31) While the aforesaid Brahmans were crying thus with a view to persuading Śrī Rāma to return, the river Tamasā came to view as though retarding the progress of Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu). (32) Releasing the horses, fatigued as they were, from the chariot and quickly making them roll afterwards, Sumantra too allowed them to graze not very far from (the bank of) the Tamasā once they had drunk water and had their body washed in the river. (33)

Thus ends Canto Forty-five in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

षट्चत्वारिंशः सर्गः

Canto XLVI

Having reached the bank of the Tamasā and thinking of the plight of the people of Ayodhya, Śrī Rāma lays himself down on a bed of leaves bewailing the lot of his parents and feeling reassured by the thought of Bharata's noble qualities; while Lakṣmaṇa opens his dialogue with Sumantra on the divine excellences of Śrī Rāma. Waking up in the meantime, Śrī Rāma urges the charioteer-minister to drive the chariot in such a way as to put the citizens that had accompanied them off the scent and lead them to think that the chariot had turned back towards Ayodhya instead of proceeding towards the forest. He then mounts the chariot along with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa and presses on to the forest.

ततस्तु तमसातीरं रम्यमाश्रित्य राघवः । सीतामुद्वीक्ष्य सौमित्रिमिदं वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ १ ॥

इयमद्य निशा पूर्वा सौमित्रे प्रहिता वनम् । वनवासस्य भद्रं ते न चोत्कण्ठितुमर्हसि ॥ २ ॥
पश्य शून्यान्यरण्यानि रुदन्तीव समन्ततः । यथानिलयमायद्भिर्निलीनानि मृगद्विजैः ॥ ३ ॥
अद्यायोध्या तु नगरी राजधानी पितुर्मम । सस्त्रीपुंसा गतानस्मान्शोचिष्यति न संशयः ॥ ४ ॥
अनुरक्ता हि मनुजा राजानं बहुभिर्गुणैः । त्वां च मां च नरव्याघ्र शत्रुघ्नभरतौ तथा ॥ ५ ॥
पितरं चानुशोचामि मातरं च यशस्विनीम् । अपि नान्धौ भवेतां नौ रुदन्तौ तावभीक्ष्णशः ॥ ६ ॥
भरतः खलु धर्मात्मा पितरं मातरं च मे । धर्मार्थकामसहितैर्वाक्यैराश्वासयिष्यति ॥ ७ ॥
भरतस्यानृशंसत्वं संचिन्त्याहं पुनः पुनः । नानुशोचामि पितरं मातरं च महाभुज ॥ ८ ॥
त्वया कार्यं नरव्याघ्र मामनुव्रजता कृतम् । अन्वेष्टव्या हि वैदेह्या रक्षणार्थे सहायता ॥ ९ ॥
अद्भिरेव हि सौमित्रे वत्स्याम्यद्य निशामिमाम् । एतद्धि रोचते मह्यं वन्येऽपि विविधे सति ॥ १० ॥

Then, taking his stand on the delightful bank of the Tamasā and gazing on Sītā, Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) spoke to the son of Sumitrā, as follows:—(1) "Today, O Lakṣmaṇa, is the (very) first night of our exile in the forest. And since it is to the forest that we have been sent away, you ought not to feel anxious (for those that have been left behind); may all be well with you ! (2) Look here: sought for shelter by beasts and birds retiring to their respective abode, the desolate woods are crying as it were on all sides. (3) The city of Ayodhya, the capital of my father (King Daśaratha), with its men and women will for its part lament today for us (three), that have departed (for the forest): there is no doubt about it. (4) For, the people (of Ayodhya) are devoted to the king no less than to you and myself, as also to Bharata and Śatrughna, for our manifold virtues, O tiger among men ! (5) I bewail (the lot of) my father as well as my illustrious mother (Kausalyā). I fear lest those parents of ours, who must be incessantly weeping, should be deprived of their eyesight. (6) I am sure that the pious-minded Bharata will console my father and mother by means of words assuring them of religious merit, material welfare and sense-gratification. (7) Reflecting again and again on the tender-heartedness of Bharata, O mighty-armed prince, I do not lament for my father and mother. (8) By following me (to the forest), O tiger among men, a (great) purpose (of mine) has been served by you; for (otherwise) aid would have to be sought for by me for looking after Sītā (a princess of the Videha kingdom). (9) I shall certainly live on water alone to-night, O son of Sumitrā ! Although there are various kinds of wild fruits and roots, this alone pleases me." (10)

एवमुक्त्वा तु सौमित्रिं सुमन्त्रमपि राघवः । अप्रमत्तस्त्वमश्वेषु भव सौम्येत्युवाच ह ॥ ११ ॥
सोऽश्वान् सुमन्त्रः संयम्य सूर्येऽस्तं समुपागते । प्रभूतयवसान् कृत्वा बभूव प्रत्यनन्तरः ॥ १२ ॥
उपास्य तु शिवां संध्यां दृष्ट्वा रात्रिमुपागताम् । रामस्य शयनं चक्रे सूतः सौमित्रिणा सह ॥ १३ ॥
तां शय्यां तमसातीरे वीक्ष्य वृक्षदलैर्वृताम् । रामः सौमित्रिणा सार्धं सभार्यः संविवेश ह ॥ १४ ॥
सभार्यं सम्प्रसुप्तं तु श्रान्तं सम्प्रेक्ष्य लक्ष्मणः । कथयामास सूताय रामस्य विविधान् गुणान् ॥ १५ ॥
जाग्रतोरेव तां रात्रिं सौमित्रेरुदितो रविः । सूतस्य तमसातीरे रामस्य ब्रुवतो गुणान् ॥ १६ ॥
गोकुलाकुलतीरायास्तमसाया विदूरतः । अवसत् तत्र तां रात्रिं रामः प्रकृतिभिः सह ॥ १७ ॥
उत्थाय च महातेजाः प्रकृतीस्ता निशाम्य च । अब्रवीद् भ्रातरं रामो लक्ष्मणं पुण्यलक्षणम् ॥ १८ ॥

Having told Lakṣmaṇa (son of Sumitrā) as above, Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu), so the tradition goes, spoke to Sumantra too as follows:—"Attend you to the horses (now), O good sir !" (11) Fastening the horses tightly, the sun having completely set, and supplying them with abundant grass, the said Sumantra returned (to the presence of Śrī Rāma). (12) Having worshipped (the goddess presiding over) the benign evening twilight (according to his grade in society) and seeing the night fallen, the charioteer along with Lakṣmaṇa (son of Sumitrā) prepared a ground suitable for Śrī Rāma to sleep on (by brushing aside gravel and particles of dust etc.) as well as a bed (of leaves). (13) Perceiving the aforesaid bed overspread (by Sumantra) with (fresh) leaves of trees on the bank of the Tamasā with the help of Lakṣmaṇa (son of Sumitrā) Śrī Rāma with his consort lay down on it: so they say. (14) Observing Śrī Rāma buried in deep sleep with his spouse, fatigued as he was, Lakṣmaṇa for his part began to recount the various virtues of Śrī Rāma before the charioteer. (15) The sun rose past Lakṣmaṇa (son of Sumitrā) even as he was recounting to the charioteer on the bank of the Tamasā the excellences of Śrī Rāma, both (Lakṣmaṇa and Sumantra) keeping awake (the whole of) that night. (16) At a respectable distance from the Tamasā, whose bank was crowded with herds of cows, Śrī Rāma spent that night with the citizens on the aforesaid stretch of land. (17) Getting up (from the bed) and seeing those people (lying at some distance), Śrī Rāma, who was possessed of extraordinary splendour, spoke (as follows) to his (younger half-) brother, Lakṣmaṇa, who was endowed with auspicious bodily marks:—(18)

अस्मद्व्यपेक्षान् सौमित्रे निर्व्यपेक्षान् गृहेष्वपि । वृक्षमूलेषु संसक्तान् पश्य लक्ष्मण साम्प्रतम् ॥ १९ ॥
यथैते नियमं पौराः कुर्वन्त्यस्मन्निवर्तने । अपि प्राणान् न्यसिष्यन्ति न तु त्यक्ष्यन्ति निश्चयम् ॥ २० ॥
यावदेव तु संसुप्तास्तावदेव वयं लघु । रथमारुह्य गच्छामः पन्थानमकुतोभयम् ॥ २१ ॥
अतो भूयोऽपि नेदानीमिक्ष्वाकुपुरवासिनः । स्वपेयुरनुरक्ता मा वृक्षमूलेषु संश्रिताः ॥ २२ ॥
पौरा ह्यात्मकृताद् दुःखाद् विप्रमोच्या नृपात्मजैः । न तु खल्वात्मना योज्या दुःखेन पुरवासिनः ॥ २३ ॥
अब्रवील्लक्ष्मणो रामं साक्षाद् धर्ममिव स्थितम् । रोचते मे तथा प्राज्ञ क्षिप्रमारुह्यतामिति ॥ २४ ॥

"Behold, O Lakṣmaṇa, the citizens, full of great longing for us and absolutely unmindful of their homes as also of their near and dear ones, lying close to the roots of trees till this (late) hour, O son of Sumitrā ! (19) From the way in which these citizens are taking pains to take us back (to Ayodhya) it seems they will even lay down their lives but would in no case give up their resolve. (20) Therefore, while they are fast asleep let us meantime quickly mount the chariot and take a route which has no fear (of molestation) from any quarter, so that the citizens of Ayodhya (the ancient capital of Ikṣwāku), who are (so keenly) devoted to me, may not henceforth (have to) repose leaning against the roots of trees as now. (21-22) The residents of a city (ruled over by a king) should indeed be completely and finally rid by the sons of their rulers of suffering brought about by (the citizens) themselves. The citizens should on no account be burdened with affliction caused by the princes themselves as in our case." (23) Lakṣmaṇa replied as follows to Śrī Rāma, who was firm as virtue incarnate:—"What you say appeals to me, O wise brother; (pray) ascend the chariot quickly." (24)

अथ रामोऽब्रवीत् सूतं शीघ्रं संयुज्यतां रथः । गमिष्यामि ततोऽरण्यं गच्छ शीघ्रमितः प्रभो ॥ २५ ॥
सूतस्ततः संत्वरितः स्यन्दनं तैर्हयोत्तमैः । योजयित्वा तु रामस्य प्राञ्जलिः प्रत्यवेदयत् ॥ २६ ॥
अयं युक्तो महाबाहो रथस्ते रथिनां वर । त्वरयाऽऽरोह भद्रं ते ससीतः सहलक्ष्मणः ॥ २७ ॥
तं स्यन्दनमधिष्ठाय राघवः सपरिच्छदः । शीघ्रगामाकुलावर्तां तमसामतरन्नदीम् ॥ २८ ॥
स संतीर्य महाबाहुः श्रीमाञ्शिवमकण्टकम् । प्रापद्यत महामार्गमभयं भयदर्शिनाम् ॥ २९ ॥
मोहनार्थं तु पौराणां सूतं रामोऽब्रवीद् वचः । उदङ्मुखः प्रयाहि त्वं रथमास्थाय सारथे ॥ ३० ॥
मुहूर्तं त्वरितं गत्वा निवर्तय रथं पुनः । यथा न विद्युः पौरा मां तथा कुरु समाहितः ॥ ३१ ॥

Śrī Rāma then said to the charioteer, "Please get the chariot ready soon. On it I shall proceed to the forest. Depart from this place at once, my lord !" (25) Having got the chariot ready with those excellent horses yoked to it with great expedition, the charioteer for his part thereupon submitted (as follows) with joined palms to Śrī Rāma.—(26) "Here is your chariot ready, O mighty-armed prince ! (Pray) ascend it quickly with Sītā and with Lakṣmaṇa, O jewel among car-warriors; may prosperity attend you !" (27) Mounting the aforesaid chariot with (all) necessaries for travelling (*viz*, his bow, armour, quiver, spade, basket and so on), Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) speedily crossed (thereby) the swift-going Tamasā thickly set with eddies. (28) Having duly crossed the stream, the glorious Śrī Rāma (who was possessed of mighty arms) reached a smooth road, free from obstacles and safe even for those who are apprehensive of danger. (29) With a view to putting the citizens off the scent, Śrī Rāma for his part spoke to the charioteer as follows.—"Mounting the chariot (alone), O charioteer, proceed you northward and, going apace awhile, bring the chariot back again. Remaining careful, drive the chariot in such a way that the citizens may not (be able to) locate me." (30-31)

रामस्य तु वचः श्रुत्वा तथा चक्रे स सारथिः । प्रत्यागम्य च रामस्य स्यन्दनं प्रत्यवेदयत् ॥ ३२ ॥
तौ सम्प्रयुक्तं तु रथं समास्थितौ तदा ससीतौ रघुवंशवर्धनौ ।
प्रचोदयामास ततस्तुरंगमान् स सारथिर्येन पथा तपोवनम् ॥ ३३ ॥
ततः समास्थाय रथं महारथः ससारथिर्दाशरथिर्वनं ययौ ।
उदङ्मुखं तं तु रथं चकार प्रयाणमाङ्गल्यनिमित्तदर्शनात् ॥ ३४ ॥
इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे षट्चत्वारिंशः सर्गः ॥ ४६ ॥

Hearing the command of Śrī Rāma, the said charioteer for his part did as he was told and, returning (by a different route) reported to Śrī Rāma the arrival of the chariot. (32) Then Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa (the promoters of the race of Raghu) for their part along with Sītā comfortably took their seats in the chariot, which was duly kept ready (by the charioteer for their use). The said charioteer thereupon urged the horses along the route by which they could reach a forest suited to the practice of austerities. (33) Having duly occupied the chariot, Śrī Rāma (son of Daśaratha), who was a great car-warrior, thereupon proceeded to the forest along with the charioteer. At the outset, (however) the charioteer placed the chariot facing the north; for he saw omens auspicious for journey (in that quarter). (34)

Thus ends Canto Forty-six in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

सप्तचत्वारिंशः सर्गः

Canto XLVII

The citizens that had followed Śrī Rāma in his journey to the forest wake to find Śrī Rāma and his party gone and begin to reproach themselves. Overcome with grief they hunt up the tracks of his chariot; but unable to find them, they helplessly return to Ayodhya in utter despondency.

प्रभातायां तु शर्वर्यां पौरास्ते राघवं विना । शोकोपहतनिश्चेष्टा बभूवुर्हतचेतसः ॥ १ ॥
शोकजाश्रुपरिद्यूना वीक्षमाणास्ततस्ततः । आलोकमपि रामस्य न पश्यन्ति स्म दुःखिताः ॥ २ ॥
ते विषादार्तवदना रहितास्तेन धीमता । कृपणाः करुणा वाचो वदन्ति स्म मनीषिणः ॥ ३ ॥

The night having ended in dawn, the aforesaid citizens, who were stunned with grief, became unconscious (as it were). (1) Made miserable by tears born of grief and full of agony, they could not catch even a glimpse of Śrī Rāma, though casting their eyes all round. (2) Their faces withered through despondency, deprived as they were of Śrī Rāma (who was full of wisdom), and (therefore) non-plussed, the citizens, even though they were wise, uttered plaintive words (as follows):—(3)

धिगस्तु खलु निद्रां तां ययापहृतचेतसः । नाद्य पश्यामहे रामं पृथूरस्कं महाभुजम् ॥ ४ ॥
कथं रामो महाबाहुः स तथावितथक्रियः । भक्तं जनमभित्यज्य प्रवासं तापसो गतः ॥ ५ ॥
यो नः सदा पालयति पिता पुत्रानिवौरसान् । कथं रघूणां स श्रेष्ठस्त्यक्त्वा नो विपिनं गतः ॥ ६ ॥
इहैव निधनं याम महाप्रस्थानमेव वा । रामेण रहितानां नो किमर्थं जीवितं हितम् ॥ ७ ॥
सन्ति शुष्काणि काष्ठानि प्रभूतानि महान्ति च । तैः प्रज्वाल्य चितां सर्वे प्रविशामोऽथवा वयम् ॥ ८ ॥
किं वक्ष्यामो महाबाहुरनसूयः प्रियंवदः । नीतः स राघवोऽस्माभिरिति वक्तुं कथं क्षमम् ॥ ९ ॥
सा नूनं नगरी दीना दृष्ट्वास्मान् राघवं विना । भविष्यति निरानन्दा सस्त्रीबालवयोऽधिका ॥ १० ॥
निर्यातास्तेन वीरेण सह नित्यं महात्मना । विहीनास्तेन च पुनः कथं द्रक्ष्याम तां पुरीम् ॥ ११ ॥

"Woe indeed be to that slumber, rendered unconscious by which we could not perceive today Śrī Rāma, who is distinguished by a broad chest and mighty arms! (4) How did that mighty-armed Śrī Rāma, whose actions, as is well known, are never ineffectual, leave for other lands in the garb of an ascetic, abandoning (us) his devoted subjects? (5) How did that jewel among the Raghus, who ever protected us as a father does his own children, proceed to the forest abandoning us? (6) Let us meet our end at this very place (by fasting) or definitely set out on the grand journey (to the north with a resolve to die). For what purpose can life be good for us, deprived as we are of Śrī Rāma? (7) Or there are any number of big logs of dry wood (here). Lighting a funeral pile, let us all enter the fire (simultaneously). (8) Shall we break the news (when asked by those left behind in Ayodhya) that Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) of mighty arms, who is free from jealousy and speaks kindly (to all), has been conveyed to the forest by us? How can such words be uttered by

us ? (9) Seeing us (back) without Śrī Rāma, that city (of Ayodhya) will surely assume a wretched and cheerless aspect with its womenfolk, children and elderly people. (10) How shall we, who went out with that high-souled hero for good, can behold that city again without him ?" (11)

इतीव बहुधा वाचो बाहुमुद्यम्य ते जनाः । विलपन्ति स्म दुःखार्ता हृतवत्सा इवाग्र्यगाः ॥ १२ ॥
ततो मार्गानुसारेण गत्वा किंचित् ततः क्षणम् । मार्गनाशाद् विषादेन महता समभिप्लुताः ॥ १३ ॥
रथमार्गानुसारेण न्यवर्तन्त मनस्विनः । किमिदं किं करिष्यामो दैवेनोपहता इति ॥ १४ ॥
तदा यथागतेनैव मार्गेण क्लान्तचेतसः । अयोध्यामगमन् सर्वे पुरीं व्यथितसज्जनाम् ॥ १५ ॥
आलोक्य नगरीं तां च क्षयव्याकुलमानसाः । आवर्तयन्त तेऽश्रूणि नयनैः शोकपीडितैः ॥ १६ ॥
एषा रामेण नगरी रहिता नातिशोभते । आपगा गरुडेनेव ह्रदादुद्धृतपन्नगा ॥ १७ ॥
चन्द्रहीनमिवाकाशं तोयहीनमिवार्णवम् । अपश्यन् निहतानन्दं नगरं ते विचेतसः ॥ १८ ॥
ते तानि वेश्मानि महाधनानि दुःखेन दुःखोपहता विशन्तः ।
नैव प्रजग्मुः स्वजनं परं वा निरीक्षमाणाः प्रविनष्टहर्षाः ॥ १९ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे सप्तचत्वारिंशः सर्गः ॥ ४७ ॥

Holding up their arms, the above-mentioned men, who were stricken with agony like cows of excellent breed bereft of their calf, lamented in various ways as above. (12) Then proceeding to some distance along the tracks (left by Śrī Rāma's chariot) for some moments, they were overwhelmed with great despondency, the tracks having disappeared immediately afterwards (due to the chariot having returned by another rout). (13) The high-minded citizens (eventually) returned (to Ayodhya) along the tracks left by the chariot (while leaving Ayodhya), saying "How is it (that the tracks have disappeared so soon) ? What shall we do ? We are doomed by Providence." (14) Depressed in spirits they all then returned, by the same route along which they had come, to the city of Ayodhya, where all good people were feeling distressed. (15) Nay, seeing the city (which presented a sorry spectacle), they shed tears in profusion through their eyes tormented with grief, their mind distracted through cheerlessness. (16) Bereft of Śrī Rāma, the aforesaid city (of Ayodhya) did not look any more charming than a river whose snakes have been uprooted from its pool by Garuda. (17) Those bewildered men beheld the city joyless like the firmament bereft of the moon and an ocean without water. (18) Entering their dwellings full of abundant riches with difficulty, the citizens could not distinguish between their own people and others, though casting their eyes all round, stricken as they were with sorrow, their joy having altogether disappeared for good. (19)

Thus ends Canto Forty-seven in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

अष्टचत्वारिंशः सर्गः

Canto XLVIII

Told of Śrī Rāma's departure for the forest by the citizens who had gone out with Śrī Rāma and returned, unable as they were to find out the tracks of his chariot, their wives reproach Kaikeyī and break into lamentation.

तेषामेवं विषण्णानां पीडितानामतीव च । बाष्पविप्लुतनेत्राणां सशोकानां मुमूर्षया ॥ १ ॥
अभिगम्य निवृत्तानां रामं नगरवासिनाम् । उद्गतानीव सत्त्वानि बभूवुरमनस्विनाम् ॥ २ ॥
स्वं स्वं निलयमागम्य पुत्रदारैः समावृताः । अश्रूणि मुमुचुः सर्वे बाष्पेण पिहिताननाः ॥ ३ ॥
न चाहृष्यन् न चामोदन् वणिजो न प्रसारयन् । न चाशोभन्त पण्यानि नापचन् गृहमेधिनः ॥ ४ ॥
नष्टं दृष्ट्वा नाभ्यनन्दन् विपुलं वा धनागमम् । पुत्रं प्रथमजं लब्ध्वा जननी नाप्यनन्दत ॥ ५ ॥
गृहे गृहे रुदत्यश्च भर्तारं गृहमागतम् । व्यगर्हयन्त दुःखार्ता वाग्भिस्तोत्त्रैरिव द्विपान् ॥ ६ ॥

The life of those citizens who had returned dejected and dispirited in this way (even) after meeting Śrī Rāma, and felt sore afflicted —full of grief as they were and seized with a longing to give up the ghost, their eyes overflowing with tears,—became extinct as it were. (1-2) Reaching each his own abode and surrounded by their sons and wife, all shed tears, their face being covered with them. (3) People neither made merry nor did they rejoice. Merchants did not spread their merchandise nor did the salable goods (spread by them) look charming. Nor (again) did the householders cook their food (at their home). (4) The people of Ayodhya did not rejoice to recover their lost property or to receive a large (additional) fortune. Nor did a mother rejoice to meet her first-born male issue. (5) Stricken with sorrow (not to find Śrī Rāma back in Ayodhya) and shedding tears, women in every house sharply reproached (in the following words) their husband returned home (without Śrī Rāma) even as the drivers of elephants would prick them with goads:—(6)

किं नु तेषां गृहैः कार्यं किं दारैः किं धनेन वा । पुत्रैर्वापि सुखैर्वापि ये न पश्यन्ति राघवम् ॥ ७ ॥
एकः सत्पुरुषो लोके लक्ष्मणः सह सीतया । योऽनुगच्छति काकुत्स्थं रामं परिचरन् वने ॥ ८ ॥
आपगाः कृतपुण्यास्ताः पद्मिन्यश्च सरांसि च । येषु यास्यति काकुत्स्थो विगाह्य सलिलं शुचि ॥ ९ ॥
शोभयिष्यन्ति काकुत्स्थमटव्यो रम्यकाननाः । आपगाश्च महानूपाः सानुमन्तश्च पर्वताः ॥ १० ॥
काननं वापि शैलं वा यं रामोऽनुगमिष्यति । प्रियातिथिमिव प्राप्तं नैनं शक्ष्यत्यनर्चितुम् ॥ ११ ॥
विचित्रकुसुमापीडा बहुमञ्जरिधारिणः । राघवं दर्शयिष्यन्ति नगा भ्रमरशालिनः ॥ १२ ॥
अकाले चापि मुख्यानि पुष्पाणि च फलानि च । दर्शयिष्यन्त्यनुक्रोशाद् गिरयो राममागतम् ॥ १३ ॥
प्रस्रविष्यन्ति तोयानि विमलानि महीधराः । विदर्शयन्तो विविधान् भूयश्चित्रांश्च निर्झरान् ॥ १४ ॥
पादपाः पर्वताग्रेषु रमयिष्यन्ति राघवम् । यत्र रामो भयं नात्र नास्ति तत्र पराभवः ॥ १५ ॥

"What purpose of theirs who do not behold Śrī Rāma will be served by their dwellings, wife or even riches or even sons or even pleasures? (7) The only virtuous man in this world is Lakṣmaṇa, who with Sītā has followed Śrī Rāma (a scion of Kakutstha), rendering service to him in the forest. (8) Fortunate too

are those rivers, lotus-ponds and lakes, bathing in whose sacred waters Śrī Rāma (a scion of Kakutstha) will proceed (further) ! (9) Forests with delightful rows of trees, as well as rivers, tracts of land abounding in water and mountains with beautiful peaks will adorn (the presence of) Śrī Rāma. (10) The forest or mountain which Śrī Rāma will visit will not fail to honour him like a beloved guest arrived near. (11) Trees crowned with flowers of various kinds and bearing numerous bunches of flowers and adorned with black bees will appear before Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu). (12) Out of regard mountains will display before Śrī Rāma as he visits them excellent blossoms and fruits too even out of season. (13) Bringing to light picturesque cascades of various kinds, mountains will further release crystal waters. (14) Trees standing on mountain-tops will afford delight to Śrī Rāma. (And) there is no (cause for) fear where Śrī Rāma is, nor is there any (occasion for) humiliation. (15)

स हि शूरो महाबाहुः पुत्रो दशरथस्य च । पुरा भवति नोऽदूरादनुगच्छाम राघवम् ॥ १६ ॥
पादच्छाया सुखं भर्तुस्तादृशस्य महात्मनः । स हि नाथो जनस्यास्य स गतिः स परायणम् ॥ १७ ॥
वयं परिचरिष्यामः सीतां यूयं च राघवम् । इति पौरस्त्रियो भर्तॄन् दुःखार्तास्तत्तदब्रुवन् ॥ १८ ॥
युष्माकं राघवोऽरण्ये योगक्षेमं विधास्यति । सीता नारीजनस्यास्य योगक्षेमं करिष्यति ॥ १९ ॥
को न्वनेनाप्रतीतेन सोत्कण्ठितजनेन च । सम्प्रीयेतामनोज्ञेन वासेन हृतचेतसा ॥ २० ॥
कैकेय्या यदि चेद् राज्यं स्यादधर्म्यमनाथवत् । न हि नो जीवितेनार्थः कुतः पुत्रैः कुतो धनैः ॥ २१ ॥
यया पुत्रश्च भर्ता च त्यक्तावैश्वर्यकारणात् । कं सा परिहरेदन्यं कैकेयी कुलपांसनी ॥ २२ ॥
कैकेय्या न वयं राज्ये भृतका हि वसेमहि । जीवन्त्या जातु जीवन्त्यः पुत्रैरपि शपामहे ॥ २३ ॥

"That heroic and mighty-armed son of Daśaratha will surely come to our view not far from this place. Let us (once more) follow Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu). (16) The shelter of the feet of such a high-souled master (as Śrī Rāma is) is our (only) joy; in fact he is the protector of us (all); he is our goal, he is our supreme asylum. (17) We shall attend on Sītā, while you shall serve Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu)." In so many words did the citizens' wives, stricken with agony, address their husbands. (18) "Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu)," (they continued,) "will satisfy your needs and safeguard your interests in the forest, while Sītā will do the same thing with regard to us womenfolk. (19) Who can possibly remain highly pleased with residence in this city, which is not commendable (in any way),—much less agreeable to the mind, the people here being full of longing (for the return of Śrī Rāma),—and by which the mind gets unsettled ? (20) If there comes to be the rule of Kaikeyī, which will not be in consonance with righteousness and which will be as good as without a protector, surely no use will be left for our life, much less for our sons and riches. (21) Whom else would that Kaikeyī,—who has brought disgrace to her family and by whom her (step-) son and husband too have been forsaken for the sake of power—not abandon ? (22) We swear by our sons that so long as we breathe we can under no circumstances live in the kingdom of Kaikeyī, till she is alive, even though we may be supported by her. (23)

या पुत्रं पार्थिवेन्द्रस्य प्रवासयति निर्घृणा । कस्तां प्राप्य सुखं जीवेदधर्म्यां दुष्टचारिणीम् ॥ २४ ॥
उपद्रुतमिदं सर्वमनालम्भमनायकम् । कैकेय्यास्तु कृते सर्वं विनाशमुपयास्यति ॥ २५ ॥

नहि प्रव्रजिते रामे जीविष्यति महीपतिः । मृते दशरथे व्यक्तं विलोपस्तदनन्तरम् ॥ २६ ॥
ते विषं पिबतालोड्य क्षीणपुण्याः सुदुःखिताः । राघवं वानुगच्छध्वमश्रुतिं वापि गच्छत ॥ २७ ॥
मिथ्याप्रव्राजितो रामः सभार्यः सहलक्ष्मणः । भरते संनिबद्धाः स्मः सौनिके पशवो यथा ॥ २८ ॥
पूर्णचन्द्राननः श्यामो गूढजत्रुररिंदमः । आजानुबाहुः पद्माक्षो रामो लक्ष्मणपूर्वजः ॥ २९ ॥
पूर्वाभिभाषी मधुरः सत्यवादी महाबलः । सौम्यश्च सर्वलोकस्य चन्द्रवत् प्रियदर्शनः ॥ ३० ॥
नूनं पुरुषशार्दूलो मत्तमातङ्गविक्रमः । शोभयिष्यत्यरण्यानि विचरन् स महारथः ॥ ३१ ॥

"Who can live happily on having obtained (as one's sovereign) that impious woman of wicked conduct who has sent into exile Prince Rāma (son of Daśaratha, a ruler of rulers), merciless as she is ? (24) The whole of this kingdom is (soon) going to be deprived of its ruler; it will no longer have any sacrificial performances and will be visited by calamities. Nay, thanks to Kaikeyī, everything will meet with ruination. (25) For, Śrī Rāma having gone into exile, the emperor will not survive and when Daśaratha is dead destruction will be the fate of the distinguished kingdom which has run an uninterrupted course (ever since the time of Ikṣwāku). (26) Therefore drink poison mixing it with water, sore distressed as you are, (the stock of) your merit having been exhausted, or follow Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) to the forest or leave for some land where (even) the name of Kaikeyī may not reach your ears. (27) Śrī Rāma along with his consort (Sītā) and with Lakṣmaṇa (his younger brother) has been deceitfully sent into exile and we have been tied firm to the apron-strings of Bharata in the same way as animals are bound tightly together (for being slaughtered) in a shambles. (28) That lotus-eyed great car-warrior, Śrī Rāma, elder brother of Lakṣmaṇa,—a tiger among men and a subduer of foes,—who is dark-brown of complexion and has a countenance resembling the full moon, (nay) whose collar-bone is invisible (because of its being covered with flesh), whose arms extend up to the knees, who takes the initiative in speaking, is sweet of expression, truthful of speech and possessed of extraordinary might, is easy of address to all people and is delightful of aspect as the moon, and whose gait resembles that of an elephant in rut, will surely adorn the woods while roaming (through them)." (29-31)

तास्तथा विलपन्त्यस्तु नगरे नागरस्त्रियः । चुक्रुशुर्दुःखसंतप्ता मृत्योरिव भयागमे ॥ ३२ ॥
इत्येवं विलपन्तीनां स्त्रीणां वेश्मसु राघवम् । जगामास्तं दिनकरो रजनी चाभ्यवर्तत ॥ ३३ ॥
नष्टज्वलनसंतापा प्रशान्ताध्यायसत्कथा । तिमिरेणानुलिप्तेव तदा सा नगरी बभौ ॥ ३४ ॥
उपशान्तवणिक्पण्या नष्टहर्षा निराश्रया । अयोध्या नगरी चासीन्नष्टतारमिवाम्बरम् ॥ ३५ ॥
तदा स्त्रियो रामनिमित्तमातुरा यथा सुते भ्रातरि वा विवासिते ।
विलप्य दीना रुरुदुर्विचेतसः सुतैर्हि तासामधिकोऽपि सोऽभवत् ॥ ३६ ॥
प्रशान्तगीतोत्सवनृत्यवादना विभ्रष्टहर्षा पिहितापणोदया ।
तदा ह्ययोध्या नगरी बभूव सा महार्णवः संक्षपितोदको यथा ॥ ३७ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डेऽष्टचत्वारिंशः सर्गः ॥ ४८ ॥

Lamenting thus in the city (of Ayodhya), the aforesaid wives of citizens, for their part, cried as one would do at the approach of some danger foreboding death, tormented as they were with agony. (32) The sun

sank below the horizon past these women, who had been mourning as aforesaid in their homes for Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu), and the night fell. (33) The city (of Ayodhya), in which the kindling of fires (even for the purposes of Agnihotra) had ceased and the chanting of the Vedas and the narration of sacred stories (relating to the Purāṇas) died out, looked as though coated with darkness at that time. (34) The city of Ayodhya,—in which the business of the trading class had been brought to a standstill and whose joy had gone, nay, which had (now) become supportless, looked dark as the sky in which the stars had disappeared. (35) Giving expression to their grief in various ways on that occasion, the women (of Ayodhya), who were sick of mind on account of Śrī Rāma, as one would feel on one's (own) son or brother having been sent into exile, cried miserably and fell unconscious, for Śrī Rāma was dearer to them than their very sons. (36) The celebrated city of Ayodhya,—in which (all) singing, rejoicing, dancing and instrumental music had been completely set at rest, whose delight had fled for ever and the (steady) rise of whose trade had been hampered—looked at that time like an ocean whose waters had dried up. (37)

Thus ends Canto Forty-eight in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

एकोनपञ्चाशः सर्गः

Canto XLIX

Having covered a long distance in the meantime Śrī Rāma finishes his morning bath and devotions and, having crossed the Vedaśruti, Gomatī and Syandikā rivers, presses forward talking with Sumantra.

रामोऽपि रात्रिशेषेण तेनैव महदन्तरम् । जगाम पुरुषव्याघ्रः पितुराज्ञामनुस्मरन् ॥ १ ॥
तथैव गच्छतस्तस्य व्यपायाद् रजनी शिवा । उपास्य तु शिवां संध्यां विषयानत्यगाहत ॥ २ ॥
ग्रामान् विकृष्टसीमान्तान् पुष्पितानि वनानि च । पश्यन्नतिययौ शीघ्रं शनैरिव हयोत्तमैः ॥ ३ ॥
शृण्वन् वाचो मनुष्याणां ग्रामसंवासवासिनाम् । राजानं धिग् दशरथं कामस्य वशमास्थितम् ॥ ४ ॥
हा नृशंसाद्य कैकेयी पापा पापानुबन्धिनी । तीक्ष्णा सम्भिन्नमर्यादा तीक्ष्णकर्मणि वर्तते ॥ ५ ॥
या पुत्रमीदृशं राज्ञः प्रवासयति धार्मिकम् । वनवासे महाप्राज्ञं सानुक्रोशं जितेन्द्रियम् ॥ ६ ॥
कथं नाम महाभागा सीता जनकनन्दिनी । सदा सुखेष्वभिरता दुःखान्यनुभविष्यति ॥ ७ ॥
अहो दशरथो राजा निःस्नेहः स्वसुतं प्रति । प्रजानामनघं रामं परित्यक्तुमिहेच्छति ॥ ८ ॥

Revolving (in his mind) the command of his father, Śrī Rāma too, a tiger among men, covered a long distance in the course of the remaining (hours of the) night itself. (1) Even as he drove along with the same alacrity the delightful night passed. Having worshipped the blissful (morning) twilight, he passed beyond a number of territories. (2) Seeing villages whose outskirts had been carefully tilled, and woodlands laden with blossoms, and led by excellent horses, he proceeded apace as though slowly (engrossed as

he was in enjoying the sights), hearing (as under) the words of those residing in villages and hamlets (close by).—"Woe unto King Daśaratha, who has fallen into the clutches of concupiscence. (3-4) Ah, the cruel and sinful Kaikeyī, who is hot-tempered and of sinful designs and has transgressed the bounds of propriety, is herself engaged at present in a cruel game in that she has been instrumental in sending into exile in the forest such a pious, highly enlightened, compassionate and self-controlled son of the emperor (5-6) How will the highly blessed Sītā, daughter of King Janaka, who is ever addicted to comforts, actually suffer hardships ? (7) What a pity that King Daśaratha has grown so devoid of affection on this occasion that he seeks to abandon Śrī Rāma, who is sinless towards the people !" (8)

एता वाचो मनुष्याणां ग्रामसंवासवासिनाम् । श्रृण्वन्नतिययौ वीरः कोसलान् कोसलेश्वरः ॥ ९ ॥
ततो वेदश्रुतिं नाम शिववारिवहां नदीम् । उत्तीर्याभिमुखः प्रायादगस्त्याध्युषितां दिशम् ॥ १० ॥
गत्वा तु सुचिरं कालं ततः शीतवहां नदीम् । गोमतीं गोयुतानूपामतरत् सागरंगमाम् ॥ ११ ॥
गोमतीं चाप्यतिक्रम्य राघवः शीघ्रगैर्हयैः । मयूरहंसाभिरुतां ततार स्यन्दिकां नदीम् ॥ १२ ॥
स महीं मनुना राज्ञा दत्तामिक्ष्वाकवे पुरा । स्फीतां राष्ट्रवृतां रामो वैदेहीमन्वदर्शयत् ॥ १३ ॥
सूत इत्येव चाभाष्य सारथिं तमभीक्ष्णशः । हंसमत्तस्वरः श्रीमानुवाच पुरुषोत्तमः ॥ १४ ॥
कदाहं पुनरागम्य सरय्वाः पुष्पिते वने । मृगयां पर्यटिष्यामि मात्रा पित्रा च संगतः ॥ १५ ॥
नात्यर्थमभिकाङ्क्षामि मृगयां सरयूवने । रतिर्ह्येषातुला लोके राजर्षिगणसम्मता ॥ १६ ॥
राजर्षीणां हि लोकेऽस्मिन् रत्यर्थं मृगया वने । काले कृतां तां मनुजैर्धन्विनामभिकाङ्क्षिताम् ॥ १७ ॥
स तमध्वानमैक्ष्वाकः सूतं मधुरया गिरा । तं तमर्थमभिप्रेत्य ययौ वाक्यमुदीरयन् ॥ १८ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे एकोनपञ्चाशः सर्गः ॥ ४९ ॥

Hearing these remarks of men residing in (the adjoining) villages and hamlets, the heroic prince of Kosala passed beyond the limits of Kosala. (9) Having crossed the river named Vedaśruti, which carries auspicious waters, he then pressed forward facing the south (the quarter occupied by Sage Agastya). (10) Journeying for his part (in that direction) for a pretty long time, he next crossed the river Gomtī, which carried cool waters and heads towards the sea (through the medium of the holy Ganga) and whose banks are adorned with cows. (11) Having reached the other bank of the Gomti too, Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) crossed with the help of swift-going horses the river Syandikā (as well), made resonant by peacocks and swans. (12) The said Śrī Rāma (now) showed to Sītā (a princess of the Videha kingdom) the prosperous land (of Kosala, the southern boundary of which was defined by the Syandikā), which was given of yore by Manu, the king of kings, to (his eldest son) Ikṣwāku and which was bounded (on all sides) by (other adjoining) territories. (13) Repeatedly addressing the aforesaid charioteer in the words "O charioteer," the glorious Rāma (the foremost of men), whose voice resembled the cackling of a swan in rut, said, (14) "When, returning back (to Ayodhya) and united (once more) with my parents, shall I roam hunting in the woodland bordering on the Sarayu and laden with blossoms ? (15) I do not hanker much after sport in the woodland bordering on the Sarayu. In fact it is a unique enjoyment made much of in the world by hosts of royal sages. (16) Truly speaking, hunting in a forest was

resorted to in this world for the gratification of royal sages. Even though it was adopted at times by the sons of Manu and was sought after by (other) bowmen, I do not long for it excessively." (17) Conversing (thus) with the charioteer on various topics in sweet words, the said Śrī Rāma (a scion of Ikṣwāku) advanced along that route. (18)

Thus ends Canto Forty-nine in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

पञ्चाशः सर्गः

Canto L

Standing with his face turned towards Ayodhya, Śrī Rāma bids farewell to his birth-place and, sending back the people hailing from the countryside, who had come to see him, and crossing the frontiers of Kosala, Śrī Rāma reaches the bank of the holy Ganga. Alighting from the chariot under an Iṅgudī tree standing on the bank, he goes forward to meet Guha, the chief of the Niṣādas, who had come to meet him. Nay, worshipping the evening twilight and taking water alone (for food and drink), the prince lies down on the ground to repose for the night; while Sumantra, Guha and Lakṣmaṇa spend the night talking together.

विशालान् कोसलान् रम्यान् यात्वा लक्ष्मणपूर्वजः । अयोध्यामुन्मुखो धीमान् प्राञ्जलिर्वाक्यमब्रवीत् ॥ १ ॥
आपृच्छे त्वां पुरिश्रेष्ठे काकुत्स्थपरिपालिते । दैवतानि च यानि त्वां पालयन्त्यावसन्ति च ॥ २ ॥
निवृत्तवनवासस्त्वामनृणो जगतीपतेः । पुनर्द्रक्ष्यामि मात्रा च पित्रा च सह संगतः ॥ ३ ॥
ततो रुचिरताम्राक्षो भुजमुद्यम्य दक्षिणम् । अश्रुपूर्णमुखो दीनोऽब्रवीज्जानपदं जनम् ॥ ४ ॥
अनुक्रोशो दया चैव यथार्हं मयि वः कृतः । चिरं दुःखस्य पापीयो गम्यतामर्थसिद्धये ॥ ५ ॥
तेऽभिवाद्य महात्मानं कृत्वा चापि प्रदक्षिणम् । विलपन्तो नरा घोरं व्यतिष्ठंश्च क्वचित् क्वचित् ॥ ६ ॥
तथा विलपतां तेषामतृप्तानां च राघवः । अचक्षुर्विषयं प्रायाद् यथार्कः क्षणदामुखे ॥ ७ ॥

Having travelled across the extensive and beautiful territory of Kosala and standing with his face turned towards Ayodhya, the wise Śrī Rāma (elder brother of Lakṣmaṇa) with joined palms addressed the following words to Ayodhya:—(1) "I take leave of you, O pre-eminent city, carefully protected by King Daśaratha (a scion of Kakutstha), as well as of the deities that protect you and dwell in you. (2) When the period of my exile in the forest has expired and I have got square with the emperor (by executing his command and implementing the promise made by him to Kaikeyī), I shall see you again, united (once more) with my

mother and father." (3) Lifting up his right arm and wearing a wretched look, his face covered with tears, Śrī Rāma (who was possessed of lovely reddish eyes) then spoke to the people hailing from the countryside (as follows):—(4) "Respect and compassion according to my worth (in your eyes) have been shown to me by you (all). Prolongation of the agony (which is being experienced by you due to your presence by my side) is most undesirable. (Therefore pray) let you be gone for accomplishing your desired object (*viz*, attending to your household work) !" (5) Greeting the high-souled prince and going round him clockwise (as a mark of respect), those men stood rooted here and there (not minding where they stood), wailing frightfully. (6) (Even) while they were lamenting as aforesaid, unsated as they were (with the sight of Śrī Rāma), Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) passed beyond their sight (just) as the sun goes out of sight at the commencement of night. (7)

ततो धान्यधनोपेतान् दानशीलजनाञ्शिवान् । अकुतश्चिद्भयान् रम्यांश्चैत्ययूपसमावृतान् ॥ ८ ॥
उद्यानाम्रवणोपेतान् सम्पन्नसलिलाशयान् । तुष्टपुष्टजनाकीर्णान् गोकुलाकुलसेवितान् ॥ ९ ॥
रक्षणीयान् नरेन्द्राणां ब्रह्मघोषाभिनादितान् । रथेन पुरुषव्याघ्रः कोसलानत्यवर्तत ॥ १० ॥
मध्येन मुदितं स्फीतं रम्योद्यानसमाकुलम् । राज्यं भोज्यं नरेन्द्राणां ययौ धृतिमतां वरः ॥ ११ ॥

Śrī Rāma (a tiger among men) then crossed in his chariot the blessed and lovely territory of Kosala, which was full of foodgrains and (other) riches and was peopled by men given to charity, which had no fear from any quarter and was covered all over with temples and sacrificial posts, which was rich in gardens and mango groves and strewn with ponds full of water, which was thickly populated with contented and well-fed people and abounded in herds of cows, (nay each village of) which deserved to be protected by kings and which was made resonant with the chanting of the Vedas. (8-10) (Thence) Śrī Rāma (the foremost of those possessed of firmness) drove at a moderate speed to a happy and prosperous territory ruled over by a number of (feudatory) chiefs and abounding in lovely gardens. (11)

तत्र त्रिपथगां दिव्यां शीततोयामशैवलाम् । ददर्श राघवो गङ्गां रम्यामृषिनिषेविताम् ॥ १२ ॥
आश्रमैरविदूरस्थैः श्रीमद्भिः समलंकृताम् । कालेऽप्सरोभिर्हृष्टाभिः सेविताम्भोह्रदां शिवाम् ॥ १३ ॥
देवदानवगन्धर्वैः किंनरैरुपशोभिताम् । नागगन्धर्वपत्नीभिः सेवितां सततं शिवाम् ॥ १४ ॥
देवाक्रीडशताकीर्णां देवोद्यानयुतां नदीम् । देवार्थमाकाशगतां विख्यातां देवपद्मिनीम् ॥ १५ ॥
जलाघाताट्टहासोग्रां फेननिर्मलहासिनीम् । क्वचिद् वेणीकृतजलां क्वचिदावर्तशोभिताम् ॥ १६ ॥
क्वचित् स्तिमितगम्भीरां क्वचिद् वेगसमाकुलाम् । क्वचिद् गम्भीरनिर्घोषां क्वचिद् भैरवनिःस्वनाम् ॥ १७ ॥
देवसंघाप्लुतजलां निर्मलोत्पलसंकुलाम् । क्वचिदाभोगपुलिनां क्वचिन्निर्मलवालुकाम् ॥ १८ ॥

There (in the confines of that kingdom) Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) saw the celestial and lovely river Ganga, which takes a threefold course (flowing as it does through heaven, earth and the subterranean regions), carries cool waters, is free from duckweed sand is frequented by Ṛṣis. (12) The blessed river was adorned with splendid hermitages standing not very far (from one another); and its pools, overflowing with water, were resorted to at suitable hours by merry celestial nymphs. (13) (Nay) the blessed river was graced with (the presence of) gods and demons, Gandharvas (celestial

musicians) and Kinnaras and was constantly* visited by the consorts of Nāgas and Gandharvas. (14) The well-known river was hemmed in by hundreds of pleasure-hills (forming part of the Himalayan range) and adorned with celestial gardens; it coursed through the heavens for the benefit of gods and contained celestial lotuses. (15) It assumed a severe aspect while indulging in a horse-laugh in the form of a noise produced by the striking of its waters against rocks, and seemed to shed a bright smile when covered with (white) foam. At some places its water was reduced to the shape of plaited locks (because of its flowing in a curved line), while at other places it was adorned with eddies. (16) Somewhere its waters were still and deep, and at other places they were disturbed with violent agitation. Here it made a deep roaring sound and there it produced a terrific noise. (17) Hosts of gods took a dip into its water, covered all over with white lotuses. Here it was hemmed in with spacious banks and there it was lined with white sands. (18)

हंससारससंघुष्टां चक्रवाकोपशोभिताम् । सदामत्तैश्च विहगैरभिपन्नामनिन्दिताम् ॥ १९ ॥
क्वचित् तीररुहैर्वृक्षैर्मालाभिरिव शोभिताम् । क्वचित् फुल्लोत्पलच्छन्नां क्वचित् पद्मवनाकुलाम् ॥ २० ॥
क्वचित् कुमुदखण्डैश्च कुड्मलैरुपशोभिताम् । नानापुष्परजोध्वस्तां समदामिव च क्वचित् ॥ २१ ॥
व्यपेतमलसंघातां मणिनिर्मलदर्शनाम् । दिशागजैर्वनगजैर्मत्तैश्च वरवारणैः ॥ २२ ॥
देवराजोपवाह्यैश्च संनादितवनान्तराम् । प्रमदामिव यत्नेन भूषितां भूषणोत्तमैः ॥ २३ ॥
फलपुष्पैः किसलयैर्वृतां गुल्मैर्द्विजैस्तथा । विष्णुपादच्युतां दिव्यामपापां पापनाशिनीम् ॥ २४ ॥
शिंशुमारैश्च नक्रैश्च भुजङ्गैश्च समन्विताम् । शंकरस्य जटाजूटाद् भ्रष्टां सागरतेजसा ॥ २५ ॥

The river, which is free from reproach (in every way) was rendered noisy by swans and cranes, was graced with Chakrawākas (a species of bird which gets disunited with its mate by night); and (other) birds which are in rut all the year round kept hovering on its waters. (19) Here it was decked with trees growing on its banks, which encircled it like garlands. Here it was covered with full-blown lotuses, while there it was carpeted with a bed of lotuses. (20) Here it was graced with beds of water-lilies in the form of buds, while there it was reddened with the pollen of numerous flowers and looked like a woman excited with passion. (21) Stocks of sins (of those bathing in it or drinking of its waters) are washed away by it and it presents an appearance spotless as the effulgence of a gem. The interior of the forests encircling its banks is rendered noisy by the elephants guarding the quarters, wild elephants and (other tame) elephants of excellent breed (belonging to the Airāvata species) used for riding by Indra (the ruler of gods). Surrounded by (trees laden with) fruits and flowers and tender leaves, shrubs and birds (of

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* We read in the Mahābhārata—

मुक्त्वा वा यदि वाभुक्त्वा रात्रौ वा यदि वा दिवा ।
न कालनियमः कश्चिद् गङ्गां प्राप्य सरिद्वराम् ॥

"One can bathe in the Ganga after taking one's meals or without taking meals and as well by day as by night. There is no restriction about time once you reach the Ganga, the foremost of (all) rivers."

various species), it looked like a young woman artistically decked with the best of jewels. Not only devoid of sins, the celestial river dispels (all) sins, flowing as it does from the (holy) feet of Lord Viṣṇu. (22—24) (In deep waters) the river was infested with sharks and crocodiles as well as with snakes and had fallen from the mass of matted hair (on the head) of Lord Śaṅkara, thanks to the power acquired through religious austerities by Emperor Bhagīratha. (25)

समुद्रमहिषीं गङ्गां सारसक्रौञ्चनादिताम् । आससाद महाबाहुः शृङ्गवेरपुरं प्रति ॥ २६ ॥
तामूर्मिकलिलावर्तामन्ववेक्ष्य महारथः । सुमन्त्रमब्रवीत् सूतमिहैवाद्य वसामहे ॥ २७ ॥
अविदूरादयं नद्या बहुपुष्पप्रवालवान् । सुमहानिङ्गुदीवृक्षो वसामोऽत्रैव सारथे ॥ २८ ॥
प्रेक्षामि सरितां श्रेष्ठां सम्मान्यसलिलां शिवाम् । देवमानवगन्धर्वमृगपन्नगपक्षिणाम् ॥ २९ ॥
लक्ष्मणश्च सुमन्त्रश्च बाढमित्येव राघवम् । उक्त्वा तमिङ्गुदीवृक्षं तदोपययतुर्हयैः ॥ ३० ॥
रामोऽभियाय तं रम्यं वृक्षमिक्ष्वाकुनन्दनः । रथादवतरत् तस्मात् सभार्यः सहलक्ष्मणः ॥ ३१ ॥
सुमन्त्रोऽप्यवतीर्याथ मोचयित्वा हयोत्तमान् । वृक्षमूलगतं राममुपतस्थे कृताञ्जलिः ॥ ३२ ॥

In the vicinity of Śṛṅgaverapura (the modern Singraur) Śrī Rāma (the mighty-armed prince) reached (the bank of) the Gaṅgā, the principal consort of Ocean, which was rendered noisy by cranes and herons. (26) Perceiving the river, which was full of eddies interspersed with its waves, the great car-warrior said to the charioteer Sumantra, "Let us halt at this very spot today. (27) Not very far from the river stands this very large Iṅgudī tree containing abundant flowers and fresh leaves. Let us halt under this very tree, O charioteer ! (28) I shall clearly behold (from that place) the benign Gaṅgā (the foremost of rivers), whose waters deserve to be respected by gods, human beings, Gandharvas, beasts, reptiles and birds (alike)." (29) Saying "Very well !" and nothing more to Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu), Lakṣmaṇa and Sumantra too then drove up to the Iṅgudī tree in the chariot drawn by horses. (30) Approaching that lovely tree, Śrī Rāma, the delight of the Ikṣwākus, alighted from that chariot along with his consort and with Lakṣmaṇa. (31) Getting down and unyoking the excellent horses, Sumantra too with joined palms stood by the side of Śrī Rāma, seated at the foot of the tree. (32)

तत्र राजा गुहो नाम रामस्यात्मसमः सखा । निषादजात्यो बलवान् स्थपतिश्चेति विश्रुतः ॥ ३३ ॥
स श्रुत्वा पुरुषव्याघ्रं रामं विषयमागतम् । वृद्धैः परिवृतोऽमात्यैर्ज्ञातिभिश्चाप्युपागतः ॥ ३४ ॥
ततो निषादाधिपतिं दृष्ट्वा दूरादुपस्थितम् । सह सौमित्रिणा रामः समागच्छद् गुहेन सः ॥ ३५ ॥
तमार्तः सम्परिष्वज्य गुहो राघवमब्रवीत् । यथायोध्या तथेदं ते राम किं करवाणि ते ॥ ३६ ॥
ईदृशं हि महाबाहो कः प्राप्स्यत्यतिथिं प्रियम् । ततो गुणवदन्नाद्यमुपादाय पृथग्विधम् ॥ ३७ ॥
अर्घ्यं चोपानयच्छीघ्रं वाक्यं चेदमुवाच ह ।

The king of that territory, Guha by name, was a friend of Śrī Rāma, dear to him as his own life. He was a Niṣāda by birth, possessed of bodily as well as military strength (owning as he did a large army consisting of all the four limbs, *viz*, elephants, chariots, horsemen and foot soldiers) and well-known as a ruler of the Niṣādas. (33) Hearing of Śrī Rāma, a tiger among men, having arrived in his territory, and accompanied by his elderly

ministers and relations too, he sought the prince. (34) Seeing from a distance the ruler of the Niṣādas waiting, the said Śrī Rāma along with Lakṣmaṇa (son of Sumitrā) thereupon went forth to meet Guha. (35) Closely embracing Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu), Guha, who felt distressed (to see him clad in the robes of a hermit) said to him, "This principality (of Śṛṅgaverapura) is as much yours as Ayodhya, O Rāma ! What shall I do for you ? In fact who will get such a beloved guest (as you), O mighty-armed prince ?" Having brought cooked rice of excellent quality and other dishes of various kinds, he then quickly offered him water to wash his hands with and other articles of worship and spoke as follows: so the tradition goes:—

स्वागतं ते महाबाहो तवेयमखिला मही ॥ ३८ ॥
वयं प्रेष्या भवान् भर्ता साधु राज्यं प्रशाधि नः ।

भक्ष्यं भोज्यं च पेयं च लेह्यं चैतदुपस्थितम् । शयनानि च मुख्यानि वाजिनां खादनं च ते ॥ ३९ ॥
गुहमेवं ब्रुवाणं तु राघवः प्रत्युवाच ह । अर्चिताश्चैव हृष्टाश्च भवता सर्वदा वयम् ॥ ४० ॥
पद्भ्यामभिगमाच्चैव स्नेहसंदर्शनेन च । भुजाभ्यां साधु वृत्ताभ्यां पीडयन् वाक्यमब्रवीत् ॥ ४१ ॥
दिष्ट्या त्वां गुह पश्यामि ह्यरोगं सह बान्धवैः । अपि ते कुशलं राष्ट्रे मित्रेषु च वनेषु च ॥ ४२ ॥
यत् त्विदं भवता किंचित् प्रीत्या समुपकल्पितम् । सर्वं तदनुजानामि नहि वर्ते प्रतिग्रहे ॥ ४३ ॥
कुशचीराजिनधरं फलमूलाशनं च माम् । विद्धि प्रणिहितं धर्मे तापसं वनगोचरम् ॥ ४४ ॥
अश्वानां खादनेनाहमर्थी नान्येन केनचित् । एतावतात्र भवता भविष्यामि सुपूजितः ॥ ४५ ॥
एते हि दयिता राज्ञः पितुर्दशरथस्य मे । एतैः सुविहितैरश्वैर्भविष्याम्यहमर्चितः ॥ ४६ ॥

"Welcome is your advent (to this place), O mighty-armed prince ! This entire land (of mine) is yours. (36-38) We are your servants, you are our master; (pray) rule over our kingdom in the proper way (from now). Nay, here are at your service dishes requiring mastication (such as rice) and those which can be eaten without mastication (such as milk boiled with rice and sugar), those which can be drunk, those which are fit to be licked up and those which can be sucked. Moreover, there are excellent beds (for you to sleep on) as well as food for your horses." (39) To Guha, who was speaking as aforesaid, Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu), for his part, they say, replied (as follows):—"We stand honoured by you by your very coming (all the way) on foot to meet us as well as by your exhibition of affection, and are always pleased (with you)." Pressing Guha tightly (once more) with his rounded arms, Śrī Rāma added the following:— (40-41) "I am glad, O Guha, I see you quite in good health with your relations. Is all well with your state, allies and forests ? (42) I for my part accept and allow you to take back all this, that has been lovingly offered by you, since I do not make use of gifts (for my own purpose). (43) Know me as under a vow to wear (a zone of) Kuśa grass, the bark of trees and deerskin and to subsist on fruits and roots (alone), to practise austerities and dwell in the forest remaining devoted to piety. (44) I am interested only in having food for the horses and in nothing else. By bein provided with this much at the present moment I shall be duly entertained by you. (45) Since these horses are beloved of my father, King Daśaratha, I shall feel honoured by these horses being duly fed." (46)

अश्वानां प्रतिपानं च खादनं चैव सोऽन्वशात् । गुहस्तत्रैव पुरुषांस्त्वरितं दीयतामिति ॥ ४७ ॥
ततश्चीरोत्तरासङ्गः संध्यामन्वास्य पश्चिमाम् । जलमेवाददे भोज्यं लक्ष्मणेनाहृतं स्वयम् ॥ ४८ ॥
तस्य भूमौ शयानस्य पादौ प्रक्षाल्य लक्ष्मणः । सभार्यस्य ततोऽभ्येत्य तस्थौ वृक्षमुपाश्रितः ॥ ४९ ॥
गुहोऽपि सह सूतेन सौमित्रिमनुभाषयन् । अन्वजाग्रत् ततो राममप्रमत्तो धनुर्धरः ॥ ५० ॥
तथा शयानस्य ततो यशस्विनो मनस्विनो दाशरथेर्महात्मनः ।
अदृष्टदुःखस्य सुखोचितस्य सा तदा व्यतीता सुचिरेण शर्वरी ॥ ५१ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे पञ्चाशः सर्गः ॥ ५० ॥

On that very spot the said Guha commanded his men in the following words:—"Let milk etc. (which horses of excellent breed are given to drink after being fed with grass etc.) and barley flour mixed with ghee, sugar and so on (which they are given to eat in addition to grass etc.) be promptly supplied to the horses." (47) Having worshipped the evening twilight, appearing in the west, with an upper garment made of the bark of trees (on his person), Śrī Rāma then took for food only water brought by Lakṣmaṇa himself (thus observing a fast in honour of the sacred river which he visited). (48) Having cleanly washed the feet of Śrī Rāma and his consort lying on the ground (to repose for the night), and receding from that place, Lakṣmaṇa took his position at the foot of another tree close by. (49) Following in the footsteps of Lakṣmaṇa (son of Sumitrā) and encouraging him to speak (on the virtues of Śrī Rāma), and wielding his bow, Guha too thereupon kept vigil with the charioteer, remaining alert (all the time) in the interest of Śrī Rāma. (50) While the illustrious, lofty-minded and high-souled Śrī Rāma (son of Daśaratha), who had never undergone suffering and who deserved (all) comforts, remained lying after that (on the ground) as aforesaid, that night eventually lingered away. (51)

Thus ends Canto Fifty in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

एकपञ्चाशः सर्गः

Canto LI

Expressing his readiness to guard the Crown prince and his consort, keeping awake the whole night, Guha importunes Lakṣmaṇa to repose. Reminding Guha of Śrī Rāma's greatness, Lakṣmaṇa, however, tells him that even though the duty of guarding his princely brother and his consort could as well be entrusted to Guha, he felt that he did not deserve to lie down in the presence of his elder brother and sister-in-law and preferred to remain awake. Expressing grief for his royal father and loving mothers he therefore spends the night talking with Guha.

तं जाग्रतमदम्भेन भ्रातुरर्थाय लक्ष्मणम् । गुहः संतापसंतप्तो राघवं वाक्यमब्रवीत् ॥ १ ॥

इयं तात सुखा शय्या त्वदर्थमुपकल्पिता । प्रत्याश्वसिहि साध्वस्यां राजपुत्र यथासुखम् ॥ २ ॥
उचितोऽयं जनः सर्वः क्लेशानां त्वं सुखोचितः । गुप्त्यर्थं जागरिष्यामः काकुत्स्थस्य वयं निशाम् ॥ ३ ॥
नहि रामात् प्रियतमो ममास्ते भुवि कश्चन । ब्रवीम्येव च ते सत्यं सत्येनैव च ते शपे ॥ ४ ॥
अस्य प्रसादादाशंसे लोकेऽस्मिन् सुमहद् यशः । धर्मावाप्तिं च विपुलामर्थकामौ च पुष्कलौ ॥ ५ ॥
सोऽहं प्रियसखं रामं शयानं सह सीतया । रक्षिष्यामि धनुष्पाणिः सर्वथा ज्ञातिभिः सह ॥ ६ ॥
न मेऽस्त्यविदितं किंचिद् वनेऽस्मिंश्चरतः सदा । चतुरङ्गं ह्यतिबलं सुमहत् संतरेमहि ॥ ७ ॥

Distressed with agony (to see the princely couple lying on the ground) Guha spoke as follows to the celebrated Lakṣmaṇa (a scion of Raghu), who was keeping awake, through sincere love, for the protection of his (elder) brother (Śrī Rāma):—(1) "Here is a cosy bed nicely prepared for you, dear brother; pray repose comfortably on it, O prince ! (2) We are all inured to hardships, while you are deserving of comforts. We shall keep vigil for the night for the protection of Śrī Rāma (a scion of Kakutstha). (3) For, none on earth is more beloved of me than Śrī Rāma: I tell you the bare truth and swear to you by truth. (4) By his grace (alone) I hope to earn very great renown in this world as also to acquire religious merit as well as abundant riches and sense-enjoyment. (5) As such I shall with my kindred guard in every way, bow in hand, my beloved friend, Śrī Rāma, reposing with Sītā. (6) Nothing in this woodland is unknown to me, wandering (as I do) all the time in it. We can (also) undoubtedly get the better of a surpassingly huge and exceptionally mighty army consisting of the four limbs (*viz*, elephants, chariots, horsemen and foot soldiers)." (7)

लक्ष्मणस्तु तदोवाच रक्ष्यमाणास्त्वयानघ । नात्र भीता वयं सर्वे धर्ममेवानुपश्यता ॥ ८ ॥
कथं दाशरथौ भूमौ शयाने सह सीतया । शक्या निद्रा मया लब्धुं जीवितं वा सुखानि वा ॥ ९ ॥
यो न देवासुरैः सर्वैः शक्यः प्रसहितुं युधि । तं पश्य सुखसंसुप्तं तृणेषु सह सीतया ॥ १० ॥
यो मन्त्रतपसा लब्धो विविधैश्च पराक्रमैः । एको दशरथस्यैष पुत्रः सदृशलक्षणः ॥ ११ ॥
अस्मिन् प्रव्रजिते राजा न चिरं वर्तयिष्यति । विधवा मेदिनी नूनं क्षिप्रमेव भविष्यति ॥ १२ ॥
विनद्य सुमहानादं श्रमेणोपरताः स्त्रियः । निर्घोषोपरतं तात मन्ये राजनिवेशनम् ॥ १३ ॥
कौसल्या चैव राजा च तथैव जननी मम । नाशंसे यदि जीवन्ति सर्वे ते शर्वरीमिमाम् ॥ १४ ॥
जीवेदपि हि मे माता शत्रुघ्नस्यान्ववेक्षया । तद् दुःखं यदि कौसल्या वीरसूर्विनशिष्यति ॥ १५ ॥
अनुरक्तजनाकीर्णा सुखा लोकप्रियावहा । राजव्यसनसंसृष्टा सा पुरी विनशिष्यति ॥ १६ ॥

Thereupon Lakṣmaṇa for his part replied (as follows):—"Being protected by you, who keep your duty alone in view, O sinless Guha, we all are not (the least) afraid (of any) in this land. (8) But so long as Śrī Rāma (son of Daśaratha) remains lying down on the ground with Sītā, how can sleep be had by me, much less nourishment intended to keep the body and soul together or amenities of life ? (9) Behold him, who cannot be withstood in battle by all the gods and demons (put together), fast asleep with comfort on a bed of straw with Sītā ! (10) When Śrī Rāma,—who was secured as a foremost (eldest both in age and virtues) son, endowed with characteristics similar to his own, by Daśaratha by virtue of his chanting of sacred texts and austerities as well as through various undertakings (in the form of sacrificial performances etc.)—has gone

into exile, the king (Daśaratha) will not live long and the earth will surely be widowed forthwith(by the demise of Daśaratha). (12) Having uttered forth a shrill cry, the women (in the city) must have ceased weeping through exhaustion (by this time). I believe the royal palace (too) has (by now) become silent after a loud wail. (13) I do not expect that Kausalyā (Śrī Rāma's mother) and the king and even so my mother (Sumitrā)—all these will outlive this night. (14) My mother might even survive due to her expecting to meet Śatrughna. But it will be painful if Kausalyā, who has given birth to a heroic son, dies. (15) That city (of Ayodhya), which has (till now) been crowded with men and women full of love (for Śrī Rāma), (nay) which has been a source of joy (to all) and brought pleasure to the world, will perish when seized with agony over the king's death. (16)

कथं पुत्रं महात्मानं ज्येष्ठपुत्रमपश्यतः । शरीरं धारयिष्यन्ति प्राणा राज्ञो महात्मनः ॥ १७ ॥
विनष्टे नृपतौ पश्चात् कौसल्या विनशिष्यति । अनन्तरं च मातापि मम नाशमुपैष्यति ॥ १८ ॥
अतिक्रान्तमतिक्रान्तमनवाप्य मनोरथम् । राज्ये राममनिक्षिप्य पिता मे विनशिष्यति ॥ १९ ॥
सिद्धार्थाः पितरं वृत्तं तस्मिन् काले ह्युपस्थिते । प्रेतकार्येषु सर्वेषु संस्करिष्यन्ति राघवम् ॥ २० ॥
रम्यचत्वरसंस्थानां संविभक्तमहापथाम् । हर्म्यप्रासादसम्पन्नां गणिकावरशोभिताम् ॥ २१ ॥
रथाश्वगजसम्बाधां तूर्यनादनिनादिताम् । सर्वकल्याणसम्पूर्णां हृष्टपुष्टजनाकुलाम् ॥ २२ ॥
आरामोद्यानसम्पन्नां समाजोत्सवशालिनीम् । सुखिता विचरिष्यन्ति राजधानीं पितुर्मम ॥ २३ ॥
अपि जीवेद् दशरथो वनवासात् पुनर्वयम् । प्रत्यागम्य महात्मानमपि पश्याम सुव्रतम् ॥ २४ ॥
अपि सत्यप्रतिज्ञेन सार्धं कुशलिनो वयम् । निवृत्ते वनवासेऽस्मिन्नयोध्यां प्रविशेमहि ॥ २५ ॥

"How will the life-breath of the high-souled king retain its hold on his body when he is no longer able to behold the high-souled Śrī Rāma, his eldest son ? (17) When the king is dead, Kausalyā will die in his wake and my mother (Sumitrā) too will meet her end immediately after. (18) Not attaining his desired end and without installing Śrī Rāma on the throne (of Ayodhya) my father will breathe his last with the words 'Lost ! Lost !!' (on his lips). (19) Fortunate men (alone) will consecrate our deceased father, Daśaratha (a scion of Raghu) in the course of all funeral rites when that (unlucky) moment has actually arrived. (20) (If, on the other hand, Daśaratha survives,) people will move about happily in the capital of my father, provided with cross roads, allocated at lovely sites, and well-aligned roads, (nay) rich in mansions of well-to-do men, temples of gods and royal palaces, adorned with the foremost of courtesans, crowded with chariots, horses and elephants, made resonant with the sound of musical instruments, full of all blessings and crowded with merry and well-fed men, well-provided with gardens and royal parks and bright with festivities carried on under the auspices of associations. (21-23) In case Daśaratha (our father) survives, we might on returning from our exile in the forest see that high-souled king of noble vows once more. (24) Let us hope when this period of exile in the forest has expired we may safely return to Ayodhya along with Śrī Rāma (who is true to his promise)." (25)

परिदेवयमानस्य दुःखार्तस्य महात्मनः । तिष्ठतो राजपुत्रस्य शर्वरी सात्यवर्तत ॥ २६ ॥

तथा हि सत्यं ब्रुवति प्रजाहिते नरेन्द्रसूनौ गुरुसौहृदाद् गुहः ।
मुमोच बाष्पं व्यसनाभिपीडितो ज्वरातुरो नाग इव व्यथातुरः ॥ २७ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे एकपञ्चाशः सर्गः ॥ ५१ ॥

While the high-souled prince (Lakṣmaṇa) sat lamenting (as above), afflicted with agony as he was, that night slipped away. (26) While Lakṣmaṇa (son of Daśaratha), a friend of the people, was speaking the truth as above out of affection for his elder brother (Śrī Rāma), Guha, who was sore pinched with adversity and oppressed with agony, shed tears like an elephant tormented with fever. (27)

Thus ends Canto Fifty-one in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

द्विपञ्चाशः सर्गः

Canto LII

While about to step into the boat brought by Guha's men and asked by Guha if he could be of any further use to the prince, Śrī Rāma enjoins him to obey the emperor. Importuned by Sumantra to take him as a personal attendant to the forest, the prince declines his loving offer and, expostulating with him, sends him back to Ayodhya. Entangling their locks into a thick mass with the milk of a banyan tree procured by Guha, Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa with Sītā get into the boat. On reaching the middle of the stream Sītā offers prayers to Mother Ganga (the deity presiding over the stream) and after crossing the river all the three halt for the night at the foot of a tree.

प्रभातायां तु शर्वर्यां पृथुवक्षा महायशाः । उवाच रामः सौमित्रिं लक्ष्मणं शुभलक्षणम् ॥ १ ॥
भास्करोदयकालोऽसौ गता भगवती निशा । असौ सुकृष्णो विहगः कोकिलस्तात कूजति ॥ २ ॥
बर्हिणानां च निर्घोषः श्रूयते नदतां वने । तराम जाह्नवीं सौम्य शीघ्रगां सागरंगमाम् ॥ ३ ॥
विज्ञाय रामस्य वचः सौमित्रिर्मित्रनन्दनः । गुहमामन्त्र्य सूतं च सोऽतिष्ठद् भ्रातुरग्रतः ॥ ४ ॥
स तु रामस्य वचनं निशम्य प्रतिगृह्य च । स्थपतिस्तूर्णमाहूय सचिवानिदमब्रवीत् ॥ ५ ॥
अस्य वाहनसंयुक्तां कर्णग्राहवतीं शुभाम् । सुप्रतारां दृढां तीर्थे शीघ्रं नावमुपाहर ॥ ६ ॥
तं निशम्य गुहादेशं गुहामात्यो गतो महान् । उपोह्य रुचिरां नावं गुहाय प्रत्यवेदयत् ॥ ७ ॥
ततः स प्राञ्जलिर्भूत्वा गुहो राघवमब्रवीत् । उपस्थितेयं नौर्देव भूयः किं करवाणि ते ॥ ८ ॥
तवामरसुतप्रख्य तर्तुं सागरगामिनीम् । नौरियं पुरुषव्याघ्र शीघ्रमारोह सुव्रत ॥ ९ ॥
अथोवाच महातेजा रामो गुहमिदं वचः । कृतकामोऽस्मि भवता शीघ्रमारोप्यतामिति ॥ १० ॥

The night having ended in dawn, the highly illustrious Śrī Rāma, who was distinguished by a broad chest, spoke (as follows) to Sumitrā's son, Lakṣmaṇa,

who was endowed with auspicious bodily marks:- (1) "The hour of sunrise is at hand and the glorious night has departed. Over there the very dark bird, the cuckoo, is uttering its notes, O dear brother! (2) The shrill note of peacocks crying in the woodland is also heard. Let us (therefore), O good brother, cross the swift-flowing Ganga (the daughter of Jahnu*), which runs towards the sea." (3) Grasping the intention of Śrī Rāma's words and informing Guha as well as the charioteer accordingly, the said Lakṣmaṇa (son of Sumitrā), the delight of his friends, stood facing his (elder) brother (Śrī Rāma). (4) Hearing the command of Śrī Rāma and bowing to it, (nay) speedily summoning his ministers, Guha (the ruler of the Niṣādas) for his part spoke (to one of them) as follows:—(5) "Quickly bring to the landing-place a beautiful and stout boat, duly equipped with oars and a helmsman, by which Śrī Rāma (and his party) could easily ferry across." (6) Hearing the aforesaid command of Guha, the great minister of Guha departed and, bringing a charming boat to the nearest landing-place, reported the matter to Guha. (7) Joining his palms, the said Guha then said to Śrī Rāma, "Here is the boat ready, my lord! What more shall I do for you? (8) Here is a boat brought for you, O tiger among men, to cross the Ganga (flowing towards the sea), O prince effulgent as the son of a divinity! (Pray) get into it promptly, O observer of noble vows!" (9) The exceptionally glorious Śrī Rāma thereupon spoke to Guha as follows:—"My desire has been accomplished by you. Please have everything placed in the boat quickly." (10)

ततः कलापान् संनह्य खड्गौ बद्ध्वा च धन्विनौ । जग्मतुर्येन तां गङ्गां सीतया सह राघवौ ॥ ११ ॥
राममेवं तु धर्मज्ञमुपागत्य विनीतवत् । किमहं करवाणीति सूतः प्राञ्जलिरब्रवीत् ॥ १२ ॥
ततोऽब्रवीद् दाशरथिः सुमन्त्रं स्पृशन् करेणोत्तमदक्षिणेन ।
सुमन्त्र शीघ्रं पुनरेव याहि राज्ञः सकाशे भव चाप्रमत्तः ॥ १३ ॥
निवर्तस्वेत्युवाचैनमेतावद्धि कृतं मम । रथं विहाय पद्भ्यां तु गमिष्यामो महावनम् ॥ १४ ॥
आत्मानं त्वभ्यनुज्ञातमवेक्ष्यार्तः स सारथिः । सुमन्त्रः पुरुषव्याघ्रमैक्ष्वाकमिदमब्रवीत् ॥ १५ ॥
नातिक्रान्तमिदं लोके पुरुषेणेह केनचित् । तव सभ्रातृभार्यस्य वासः प्राकृतवद् वने ॥ १६ ॥
न मन्ये ब्रह्मचर्ये वा स्वधीते वा फलोदयः । मार्दवार्जवयोर्वापि त्वां चेद् व्यसनमागतम् ॥ १७ ॥
सह राघव वैदेह्या भ्रात्रा चैव वने वसन् । त्वं गतिं प्राप्स्यसे वीर त्रींल्लोकांस्तु जयन्निव ॥ १८ ॥
वयं खलु हता राम ये त्वया ह्युपवञ्चिताः । कैकेय्या वशमेष्यामः पापाया दुःखभागिनः ॥ १९ ॥
इति ब्रुवन्नात्मसमं सुमन्त्रः सारथिस्तदा । दृष्ट्वा दूरगतं रामं दुःखार्तो रुरुदे चिरम् ॥ २० ॥

Having equipped themselves with an armour each and fastened their quivers and swords (to their person), the two archers, Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa (scions of Raghu), with Sītā then sought the said Ganga through the same landing-place as was resorted to by others. (11) Humbly approaching Śrī Rāma, who

* The river Gaṅgā, when brought down from heaven by the austerities of Emperor Bhagīratha, followed the latter to the subterranean regions in order to consecrate the remains of his great grand-uncles. In its course it inundated the sacrificial ground of King Jahnu, who in his anger drank up its waters. But the gods and sages and particularly Bhagīratha appeased his anger and he consented to release the waters through his ears. The river is thenceforth regarded as his daughter.

knew what is right and stood ready to leave, the charioteer humbly spoke with joined palms as follows: "What shall I do?" (12) Touching Sumantra with his auspicious right hand, Śrī Rāma (son of Daśaratha) thereupon replied to him, "Return speedily to the king's presence, O Sumantra, and do not lose your presence of mind." (13) "(Please) return," said he to Sumantra (and added), "this much is enough service to me. Leaving the chariot, we shall henceforth proceed to the great forest (of Daṇḍaka) on foot." (14) Distressed to find himself dismissed, the said charioteer, Sumantra, for his part submitted as follows to Śrī Rāma (a scion of Ikṣwāku), a tiger among men:—(15) "That destiny, by which has been brought about your exile in the forest with your consort and (younger) brother like that of a common man, has never been set aside by any man in this world. (16) I believe there is no gain in leading the (austere) life of a religious student (in the house of one's teacher), in studying the Vedas (as an integral part of such a life) or even in cultivating tenderness and guilelessness, when adversity has come (even) to you (in the shape of exile). (17) Living (as an exile) in the forest with Sītā (a princess of the Videha kingdom) and (younger half) brother, O scion of Raghu, you will surely attain the same (exalted) position as one who has conquered (all) the worlds. (18) We are actually ruined, O Rāma, in that, forsaken by you, we shall surely fall under the sway of the sinful Kaikeyī and reap suffering." (19) Speaking thus in a strain worthy of himself, Sumantra, the charioteer, then wept long, stricken with sorrow as he was to see (with his mental eyes) Śrī Rāma gone to some distance. (20)

ततस्तु विगते बाष्पे सूतं स्पृष्टोदकं शुचिम् । रामस्तु मधुरं वाक्यं पुनः पुनरुवाच तम् ॥ २१ ॥
इक्ष्वाकूणां त्वया तुल्यं सुहृदं नोपलक्षये । यथा दशरथो राजा मां न शोचेत् तथा कुरु ॥ २२ ॥
शोकोपहतचेताश्च वृद्धश्च जगतीपतिः । कामभारावसन्नश्च तस्मादेतद् ब्रवीमि ते ॥ २३ ॥
यद् यथाऽऽज्ञापयेत् किंचित् स महात्मा महीपतिः । कैकेय्याः प्रियकामार्थं कार्यं तदविकाङ्क्षया ॥ २४ ॥
एतदर्थं हि राज्यानि प्रशासति नराधिपाः । यदेषां सर्वकृत्येषु मनो न प्रतिहन्यते ॥ २५ ॥
यद् यथा स महाराजो नालीकमधिगच्छति । न च ताम्यति शोकेन सुमन्त्र कुरु तत् तथा ॥ २६ ॥
अदृष्टदुःखं राजानं वृद्धमार्यं जितेन्द्रियम् । ब्रूयास्त्वमभिवाद्यैव मम हेतोरिदं वचः ॥ २७ ॥
न चाहमनुशोचामि लक्ष्मणो न च शोचति । अयोध्यायाश्च्युताश्चेति वने वत्स्यामहेति वा ॥ २८ ॥
चतुर्दशसु वर्षेषु निवृत्तेषु पुनः पुनः । लक्ष्मणं मां च सीतां च द्रक्ष्यसे शीघ्रमागतान् ॥ २९ ॥

When his tears got dried up and the charioteer had sipped some water and got purified (the tears having brought defilement in him), Śrī Rāma for his part repeatedly spoke to him in a sweet tone as follows:—(21) "I do not perceive anyone who is as great a friend of the Ikṣwākus as you are. (Pray) act in such wise that King Daśaratha may not grieve for me. (22) The emperor is not only confused in mind through grief, he is aged too and has his host of desires (to see me installed as Prince Regent and so on) thwarted. Hence I tell you this. (23) Whatever and howsoever that high-souled emperor may enjoin you to do with intent to oblige mother Kaikeyī should be unhesitatingly done (by you). (24) Kings rule their states only with this end in view that their will may not be crossed in any undertaking. (25) Handle everything in such a way, O Sumantra, that the said emperor neither gets displeased nor does he feel distressed through grief. (26) Only after greeting the old and venerable king, who has never known suffering and has subdued his senses, make you this submission (to him) on my behalf:—

(27) 'Neither do I grieve nor does Lakṣmaṇa nor Sītā feels sorry that we have been uprooted from Ayodhya or that we are going to dwell in the forest. (28) When fourteen years have elapsed, you will once more see Lakṣmaṇa, myself and Sītā too returned apace (from the forest).' (29)

एवमुक्त्वा तु राजानं मातरं च सुमन्त्र मे । अन्याश्च देवीः सहिताः कैकेयीं च पुनः पुनः ॥ ३० ॥
आरोग्यं ब्रूहि कौसल्यामथ पादाभिवन्दनम् । सीताया मम चार्यस्य वचनाल्लक्ष्मणस्य च ॥ ३१ ॥
ब्रूयाश्चापि महाराजं भरतं क्षिप्रमानय । आगतश्चापि भरतः स्थाप्यो नृपमते पदे ॥ ३२ ॥
भरतं च परिष्वज्य यौवराज्येऽभिषिच्य च । अस्मत्संतापजं दुःखं न त्वामभिभविष्यति ॥ ३३ ॥
भरतश्चापि वक्तव्यो यथा राजनि वर्तसे । तथा मातृषु वर्तेथाः सर्वास्वेवाविशेषतः ॥ ३४ ॥
यथा च तव कैकेयी सुमित्रा चाविशेषतः । तथैव देवी कौसल्या मम माता विशेषतः ॥ ३५ ॥
तातस्य प्रियकामेन यौवराज्यमवेक्षता । लोकयोरुभयोः शक्यं नित्यदा सुखमेधितुम् ॥ ३६ ॥
निवर्त्यमानो रामेण सुमन्त्रः प्रतिबोधितः । तत्सर्वं वचनं श्रुत्वा स्नेहात् काकुत्स्थमब्रवीत् ॥ ३७ ॥

"Having repeated as aforesaid to the king and my mother (Kausalyā), O Sumantra, as well as to the other queens along with Sumitrā, as also to Kaikeyī, tell Kausalyā that I am keeping good health. Then convey salutations at her feet on behalf of Sītā as well as myself, the elder brother, and of Lakṣmaṇa. (30-31) Also submit to the emperor (my father), '(Pray) get Bharata soon. And when returned (from his maternal uncle's), Bharata should be installed in the office intended for him by Your Majesty. (32) When you have (met and) embraced Bharata and installed him in the office of Prince Regent, the agony caused by the remorse felt by you on our account will no longer (be able to) overpower you.' (33) Bharata too should be exhorted in the following words:—'You should behave towards all your mothers without distinction in the same way as you do towards the king (your father). (34) (Even) as Kaikeyī and Sumitrā too are equally worthy of respect to you, more so is my mother, Queen Kausalyā (who is senior to all). (35) If you accept the office of Prince Regent with intent to please our father, it will be possible for you to thrive happily in both the worlds (this world and the next).''' (36) Hearing the whole of the aforesaid discourse when instructed (as above) by Śrī Rāma with a view to his being sent back (to Ayodhya), Sumantra lovingly replied to him (as follows):—(37)

यदहं नोपचारेण ब्रूयां स्नेहादविक्लवम् । भक्तिमानिति तत् तावद् वाक्यं त्वं क्षन्तुमर्हसि ॥ ३८ ॥
कथं हि त्वद्विहीनोऽहं प्रतियास्यामि तां पुरीम् । तव तात वियोगेन पुत्रशोकातुरामिव ॥ ३९ ॥
सराममपि तावन्मे रथं दृष्ट्वा तदा जनः । विना रामं रथं दृष्ट्वा विदीर्येतापि सा पुरी ॥ ४० ॥
दैन्यं हि नगरी गच्छेद् दृष्ट्वा शून्यमिमं रथम् । सूतावशेषं स्वं सैन्यं हतवीरमिवाहवे ॥ ४१ ॥
दूरेऽपि निवसन्तं त्वां मानसेनाग्रतः स्थितम् । चिन्तयन्तोऽद्य नूनं त्वां निराहाराः कृताः प्रजाः ॥ ४२ ॥
दृष्टं तद् वै त्वया राम यादृशं त्वत्प्रवासने । प्रजानां संकुलं वृत्तं त्वच्छोकक्लान्तचेतसाम् ॥ ४३ ॥
आर्तनादो हि यः पौरैरुन्मुक्तस्त्वत्प्रवासने । सरथं मां निशाम्यैव कुर्युः शतगुणं ततः ॥ ४४ ॥

"If I speak to you in an unfaltering tone due to affection and do not speak with reverence (which is due to you as my master), you ought in fact to forgive my mode of speech, considering me as full of devotion (to you). (38) Bereft of you, how shall I actually return to that city (of Ayodhya), which through separation from you has been reduced to the state of a mother

stricken with grief due to separation from her son, O dear child ? (39) The people (of Ayodhya) were really torn with grief even to see this chariot with Śrī Rāma (yourself) at the time of your departure from Ayodhya. On seeing it without Śrī Rāma (this time) that city itself may be riven in two. (40) The city will be reduced to a sad plight on seeing this chariot without you (even) as the army of a hero on seeing his chariot with the charioteer (alone) surviving, the warrior having been killed in battle. (41) Thinking of you, who though dwelling afar, are (ever) mentally present before them, the people (of Ayodhya) must have been deprived of their food (and drink) today. (42) The great confusion that ensued, on (the occasion of) your exile, among the people (of Ayodhya), whose mind was depressed through grief on your account, was witnessed by you with your own eyes, O Rāma ! (43) (Nay) perceiving me alone with the chariot, the people of Ayodhya will raise a cry of distress a hundred times louder than that which was actually raised by them at the time of your banishment. (44)

अहं किं चापि वक्ष्यामि देवीं तव सुतो मया । नीतोऽसौ मातुलकुलं संतापं मा कृथा इति ॥ ४५ ॥
असत्यमपि नैवाहं ब्रूयां वचनमीदृशम् । कथमप्रियमेवाहं ब्रूयां सत्यमिदं वचः ॥ ४६ ॥
मम तावन्नियोगस्थास्त्वद्बन्धुजनवाहिनः । कथं रथं त्वया हीनं प्रवाह्यन्ति हयोत्तमाः ॥ ४७ ॥
तन्न शक्ष्याम्यहं गन्तुमयोध्यां त्वदृतेऽनघ । वनवासानुयानाय मामनुज्ञातुमर्हसि ॥ ४८ ॥
यदि मे याचमानस्य त्यागमेव करिष्यसि । सरथोऽग्निं प्रवेक्ष्यामि त्यक्तमात्र इह त्वया ॥ ४९ ॥
भविष्यन्ति वने यानि तपोविघ्नकराणि ते । रथेन प्रतिबाधिष्ये तानि सर्वाणि राघव ॥ ५० ॥
त्वत्कृतेन मया प्राप्तं रथचर्याकृतं सुखम् । आशंसे त्वत्कृतेनाहं वनवासकृतं सुखम् ॥ ५१ ॥
प्रसीदेच्छामि तेऽरण्ये भवितुं प्रत्यनन्तरः । प्रीत्याभिहितमिच्छामि भव मे प्रत्यनन्तरः ॥ ५२ ॥
इमेऽपि च हया वीर यदि ते वनवासिनः । परिचर्यां करिष्यन्ति प्राप्स्यन्ति परमां गतिम् ॥ ५३ ॥
तव शुश्रूषणं मूर्ध्ना करिष्यामि वने वसन् । अयोध्यां देवलोकं वा सर्वथा प्रजहाम्यहम् ॥ ५४ ॥
नहि शक्या प्रवेष्टुं सा मयायोध्या त्वया विना । राजधानी महेन्द्रस्य यथा दुष्कृतकर्मणा ॥ ५५ ॥
वनवासे क्षयं प्राप्ते ममैष हि मनोरथः । यदनेन रथेनैव त्वां वहेयं पुरीं पुनः ॥ ५६ ॥
चतुर्दश हि वर्षाणि सहितस्य त्वया वने । क्षणभूतानि यास्यन्ति शतसंख्यानि चान्यथा ॥ ५७ ॥
भृत्यवत्सल तिष्ठन्तं भर्तृपुत्रगते पथि । भक्तं भृत्यं स्थितं स्थित्या न मा त्वं हातुमर्हसि ॥ ५८ ॥

"Again, shall I (falsely) submit to the queen (Kausalyā) as follows:— 'Your son, Rāma, has been conveyed to his maternal uncle's; (pray) do not give way to agony.' (45) I dare not make such a false report, even though it is pleasing to the ear, (and save her from agony for some time). (On the other hand) how can I make a correct yet unpalatable report (that Rāma has proceeded to the forest) ? (46) (Even if you insist on my returning to Ayodhya at all events) how will the excellent horses (drawing the chariot), which are subject to my control and transport only your kindred and yourself, draw the chariot without you ? (47) Therefore, O sinless prince, I shall not be able to return to Ayodhya (even if I try to do so) without you. You ought (under such circumstances) to allow me to follow you to share your exile in the forest. (48) If you (still) insist on leaving me, even though I solicit you to take me with you, I shall enter a fire, chariot and all, on this spot the moment I am forsaken by you. (49) With the help of the

chariot, O scion of Raghu, I shall repel all those creatures that cause interruption in your austerities in the forest. (50) By your kind offices the pleasure of driving your chariot was secured by me. By your grace (alone) I hope (this time) to enjoy the pleasure of dwelling (with you) in the forest. (51) Be gracious (to me by allowing me to follow you to the forest). I long to be your close associate in the forest. I wish to hear your loving assent in the words 'Be my close associate !' (52) These horses too, O heroic prince, if they (get an opportunity to) serve you while you dwell in the forest, will attain the highest destiny (by serving their beloved master). (53) Dwelling in the forest (with you) I shall render service to you with my head bent low, and (in order to be allowed this privilege) I quit for good in every way Ayodhya and (even) heaven (the realm of gods). (54) Bereft of you Ayodhya is incapable of being entered by me much in the same way as Amarāvatī (the capital of the mighty Indra) is inaccessible to a man of sinful deeds. (55) Indeed this is my ambition that when your exile in the forest has come to an end I may convey you back to Ayodhya in this very chariot. (56) So long as I remain with you in the forest, fourteen years will undoubtedly slip away past me as though reduced to as many moments; whereas otherwise (if I stay away from you) they will multiply a hundredfold. (57) O prince, who are so fond of your dependants, you ought not to desert me, your devoted servant, standing resolved to tread on the path chosen by the son of his master and (ever) keeping within bounds." (58)

एवं बहुविधं दीनं याचमानं पुनः पुनः । रामो भृत्यानुकम्पी तु सुमन्त्रमिदमब्रवीत् ॥ ५९ ॥
जानामि परमां भक्तिमहं ते भर्तृवत्सल । शृणु चापि यदर्थं त्वां प्रेषयामि पुरीमितः ॥ ६० ॥
नगरीं त्वां गतं दृष्ट्वा जननी मे यवीयसी । कैकेयी प्रत्ययं गच्छेदिति रामो वनं गतः ॥ ६१ ॥
विपरीते तुष्टिहीना वनवासं गते मयि । राजानं नातिशङ्केत मिथ्यावादीति धार्मिकम् ॥ ६२ ॥
एष मे प्रथमः कल्पो यदम्बा मे यवीयसी । भरतारक्षितं स्फीतं पुत्रराज्यमवाप्स्यते ॥ ६३ ॥
मम प्रियार्थं राज्ञश्च सुमन्त्र त्वं पुरीं व्रज । संदिष्टश्चापि यानर्थांस्तांस्तान् ब्रूयास्तथा तथा ॥ ६४ ॥

Śrī Rāma, for his part, compassionate as he was towards his dependants, replied as follows to Sumantra, who was piteously supplicating again and again in many ways as aforesaid:—(59) "I know your supreme devotion to me, O charioteer so fond of your master ! Nevertheless (pray) hear wherefore I send you (back) to Ayodhya from here. (60) Seeing you returned to the capital, my youngest mother, Kaikeyī, should feel convinced that I (Rāma) have left for the forest. (61) Otherwise (in the event of your remaining with me) let not Kaikeyī,—who is not going to derive satisfaction otherwise (even) on my having gone into exile in the forest,—suspect the pious king to be a liar. (62) This is my foremost intention (in sending you back to Ayodhya) that my youngest mother (Kaikeyī) should secure the kingdom (of Ayodhya), protected by Bharata and (thus) ruled by her own son, in good condition (and this will be possible only on your returning to Ayodhya; for till then the possibility of my returning to Ayodhya will not be completely ruled out and till then Bharata too will not be called back to Ayodhya and everyone will remain in a state of suspense). (63) For my pleasure and for the pleasure of the emperor (therefore), O Sumantra,

return you to the capital and deliver all the messages that you have been asked to deliver each in the way you have been asked to do." (64)

इत्युक्त्वा वचनं सूतं सान्त्वयित्वा पुनः पुनः । गुहं वचनमक्लीबो रामो हेतुमदब्रवीत् ॥ ६५ ॥
नेदानीं गुह योग्योऽयं वासो मे सजने वने । अवश्यमाश्रमे वासः कर्तव्यस्तद्गतो विधिः ॥ ६६ ॥
सोऽहं गृहीत्वा नियमं तपस्विजनभूषणम् । हितकामः पितुर्भूयः सीताया लक्ष्मणस्य च ॥ ६७ ॥
जटाः कृत्वा गमिष्यामि न्यग्रोधक्षीरमानय । तत्क्षीरं राजपुत्राय गुहः क्षिप्रमुपाहरत् ॥ ६८ ॥
लक्ष्मणस्यात्मनश्चैव रामस्तेनाकरोज्जटाः । दीर्घबाहुर्नरव्याघ्रो जटिलत्वमधारयत् ॥ ६९ ॥
तौ तदा चीरसम्पन्नौ जटामण्डलधारिणौ । अशोभेतामृषिसमौ भ्रातरौ रामलक्ष्मणौ ॥ ७० ॥

Having offered explanation to the charioteer as aforesaid and consoling him again and again, Śrī Rāma, who was not feeling the least timorous, gave (the following) reasoned instructions to Guha:—(65) "It is not proper for me on this occasion to dwell, as I am doing, in a forest in which my (own) men are present. Therefore an abode must be taken up by me in a hermitage (in an uninhabited region) and the procedure to be followed in this behalf must be observed (by me). (66) Adopting with the concurrence of Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa a discipline (in the shape of eating wild fruits, roots and bulbs etc. and reposing on the ground and so on) which serves as an embellishment for ascetics, seeking as I do the (spiritual) welfare of my father, and wearing matted hair, I should (like to) proceed further. (Therefore) please bring the milk-like exudation of a banyan tree." Guha fetched such exudation at once for the prince. (67-68) With that exudation Śrī Rāma, a tiger among men, who was possessed of long arms, formed his own locks as well as those of Lakṣmaṇa (who had also taken a vow of ascetic life) into a mass of clotted hair and (thus) wore the distinguishing mark of an ascetic (in the shape of matted hair). (69) Clad in the bark of trees and wearing a rounded mass of matted locks (on their head) those two brothers, Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, looked charming at that time like two Ṛṣis (ascetic sages). (70)

ततो वैखानसं मार्गमास्थितः सहलक्ष्मणः । व्रतमादिष्टवान् रामः सहायं गुहमब्रवीत् ॥ ७१ ॥
अप्रमत्तो बले कोशे दुर्गे जनपदे तथा । भवेथा गुह राज्यं हि दुरारक्षतमं मतम् ॥ ७२ ॥
ततस्तं समनुज्ञाप्य गुहमिक्ष्वाकुनन्दनः । जगाम तूर्णमव्यग्रः सभार्यः सहलक्ष्मणः ॥ ७३ ॥
स तु दृष्ट्वा नदीतीरे नावमिक्ष्वाकुनन्दनः । तितीर्षुः शीघ्रगां गङ्गामिदं वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ ७४ ॥
आरोह त्वं नरव्याघ्र स्थितां नावमिमां शनैः । सीतां चारोपयान्वक्षं परिगृह्य मनस्विनीम् ॥ ७५ ॥
स भ्रातुः शासनं श्रुत्वा सर्वमप्रतिकूलयन् । आरोप्य मैथिलीं पूर्वमारुरोहात्मवांस्ततः ॥ ७६ ॥
अथारुरोह तेजस्वी स्वयं लक्ष्मणपूर्वजः । ततो निषादाधिपतिर्गुहो ज्ञातीनचोदयत् ॥ ७७ ॥
राघवोऽपि महातेजा नावमारुह्य तां ततः । ब्रह्मवत् क्षत्रवच्चैव जजाप हितमात्मनः ॥ ७८ ॥
आचम्य च यथाशास्त्रं नदीं तां सह सीतया । प्रणमत् प्रीतिसंतुष्टो लक्ष्मणश्च महारथः ॥ ७९ ॥
अनुज्ञाय सुमन्त्रं च सबलं चैव तं गुहम् । आस्थाय नावं रामस्तु चोदयामास नाविकान् ॥ ८० ॥
ततस्तैश्चालिता नौका कर्णधारसमाहिता । शुभस्फ्यवेगाभिहता शीघ्रं सलिलमत्यगात् ॥ ८१ ॥
मध्यं तु समनुप्राप्य भागीरथ्यास्त्वनिन्दिता । वैदेही प्राञ्जलिर्भूत्वा तां नदीमिदमब्रवीत् ॥ ८२ ॥

Having (temporarily) adopted the ways of a hermit along with Lakṣmaṇa and accepted the vow of an ascetic life, Śrī Rāma

then spoke (as follows) to his helpmate, Guha:—(71) "Remain vigilant in the matter of your army, exchequer, fortress and the people, O Guha; for a state is recognized as most difficult to protect." (72) Having duly taken leave of the celebrated Guha, and remaining undisturbed (all the time), Śrī Rāma (the delight of the Ikṣwākus) then quickly departed along with his consort (Sītā) and with Lakṣmaṇa. (73) Beholding a boat on the bank of the river and keen to cross the swift-flowing Ganga, Śrī Rāma (the delight of the Ikṣwākus) for his part spoke (to Lakṣmaṇa) as follows:—(74) "Holding the boat standing there (and thereby steadying it), help the timid Sītā to get into it slowly and step (you) into it forthwith, O lion among men !" (75) Hearing the command of his (elder) brother and helping Sītā (a princess of Mithilā) to get into the boat first, the self-possessed Lakṣmaṇa stepped into the boat afterwards, (thus acting in full conformity with his brother's command). (76) The glorious Rāma (elder brother of Lakṣmaṇa) himself got into the boat last; and after that Guha, the ruler of the Niṣādas, commanded his kinsmen to row the boat (across the stream). (77) Having got into the aforesaid boat, Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu), for his part, who was possessed of unique splendour, then recited a sacred text (दैवी नावम् etc.) fit for the Brahmans and Kṣatriyas alike and conducive to his own good. (78) Nay, sipping the water of the Ganga according to the scriptural ordinance and feeling highly gratified, Śrī Rāma with Sītā bowed low to that river and Lakṣmaṇa, the great car-warrior, followed suit. (79) Further, bidding farewell to Sumantra as well as to the celebrated Guha and his army and, occupying his seat in the boat, Śrī Rāma for his part urged the boatmen to row the boat. (80) Rowed by the boatmen and directed by the helmsman, the boat, propelled by the swift movement of the beautiful oars, moved swiftly across the water. (81) Having duly reached the middle of the Ganga, Sītā (a princess of the Videha kingdom), for her part, who was irreproachable (in every way), spoke as follows with joined palms to the said river:—(82)

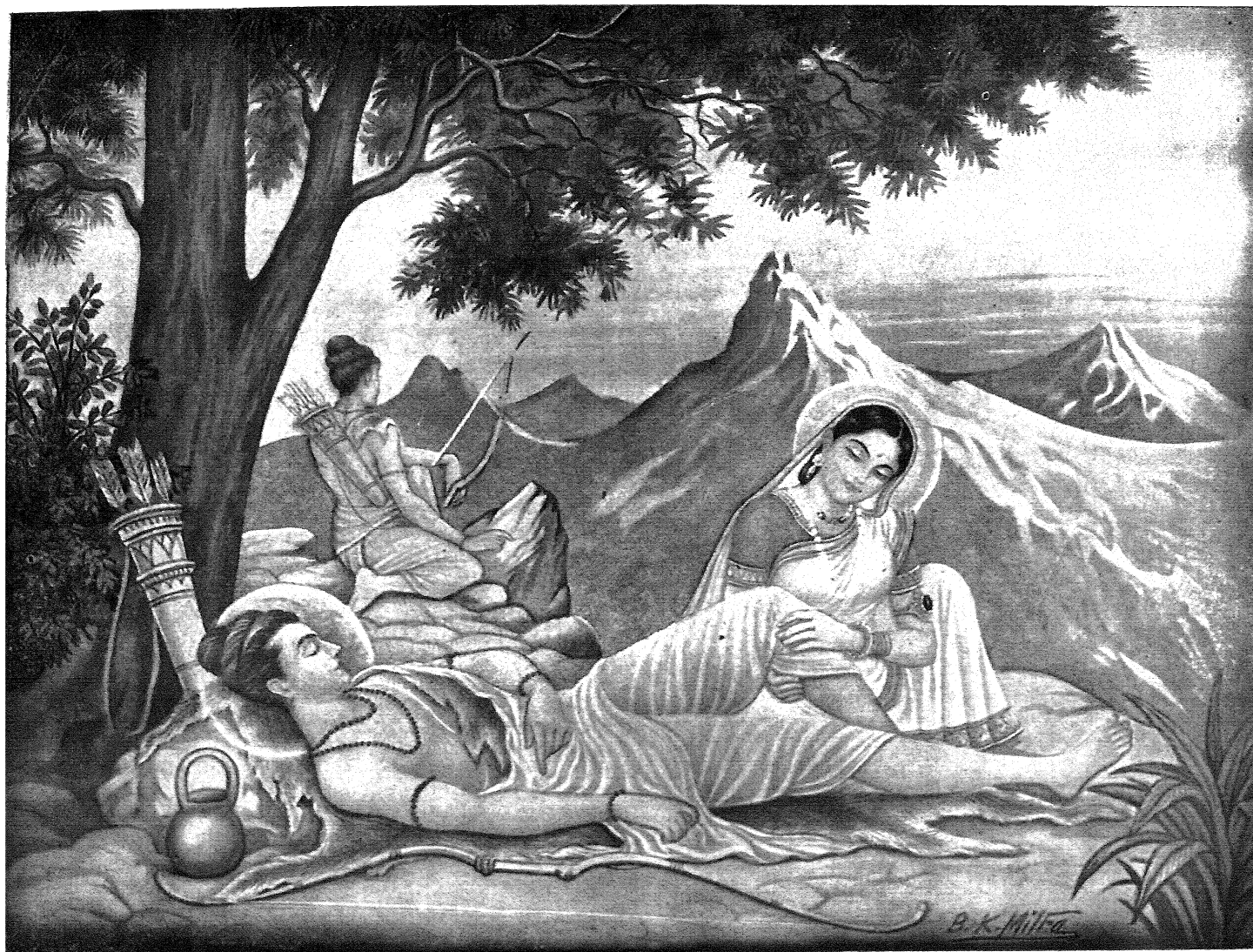
पुत्रो दशरथस्यायं महाराजस्य धीमतः । निदेशं पालयत्वेनं गङ्गे त्वदभिरक्षितः ॥ ८३ ॥
चतुर्दश हि वर्षाणि समग्राण्युष्य कानने । भ्रात्रा सह मया चैव पुनः प्रत्यागमिष्यति ॥ ८४ ॥
ततस्त्वां देवि सुभगे क्षेमेण पुनरागता । यक्ष्ये प्रमुदिता गङ्गे सर्वकामसमृद्धिनी ॥ ८५ ॥
त्वं हि त्रिपथगे देवि ब्रह्मलोकं समक्षसे । भार्या चोदधिराजस्य लोकेऽस्मिन् सम्प्रदृश्यसे ॥ ८६ ॥
सा त्वां देवि नमस्यामि प्रशंसामि च शोभने । प्राप्तराज्ये नरव्याघ्रे शिवेन पुनरागते ॥ ८७ ॥
गवां शतसहस्रं च वस्त्राण्यन्नं च पेशलम् । ब्राह्मणेभ्यः प्रदास्यामि तव प्रियचिकीर्षया ॥ ८८ ॥
सुराघटसहस्रेण मांसभूतौदनेन च । यक्ष्ये त्वां प्रीयतां देवि पुरीं पुनरुपागता ॥ ८९ ॥
यानि त्वत्तीरवासीनि दैवतानि च सन्ति हि । तानि सर्वाणि यक्ष्यामि तीर्थान्यायतनानि च ॥ ९० ॥
पुनरेव महाबाहुर्मया भ्रात्रा च संगतः । अयोध्यां वनवासात् तु प्रविशत्वनघोऽनघे ॥ ९१ ॥

"Protected on all sides by you, O (mother) Ganga, may this son of the wise Emperor Daśaratha execute this decree (of the emperor to remain in exile for fourteen years). (83) When, having sojourned in the forest for full fourteen years, he arrives at your bank once more with his (younger) brother (Lakṣmaṇa) and myself, then, returned in safety, O blessed goddess, with all my desires fulfilled, O Ganga, I shall worship you with great delight. (84-85) Since you, O goddess flowing through heaven, earth and the subterranean regions, include (in your basin) the realm of

Brahmā (the outermost of the six spheres enveloping the earth) and are vividly seen on this (terrestrial) plane as a consort of the Ocean-king (the deity presiding over the oceans), I, Sītā, greet and extol you, O charming goddess ! When Śrī Rāma (a tiger among men) has safely returned and regained his throne, I shall give away a lakh of cows as well as articles of wearing apparel and food-stuffs of excellent quality to the Brahmans with intent to please you. (86—88) Having returned to Ayodhya I shall worship you with a thousand (and one) articles not available (even) to gods as well as with lands free from revenue, raiment and cooked rice*. Be pleased (with me), O goddess ! (89) Nay, I shall without doubt offer worship to all the deities that have their abode on your banks as well as to all sacred spots and sites (on your banks). (90) May the sinless Rāma (who is possessed of mighty arms) for his part re-enter Ayodhya from the forest along with Lakṣmaṇa and myself, O sinless goddess !" (91)

तथा सम्भाषमाणा सा सीता गङ्गामनिन्दिता । दक्षिणा दक्षिणं तीरं क्षिप्रमेवाभ्युपागमत् ॥ ९२ ॥
तीरं तु समनुप्राप्य नावं हित्वा नरर्षभः । प्रातिष्ठत सह भ्रात्रा वैदेह्या च परंतपः ॥ ९३ ॥
अथाब्रवीन्महाबाहुः सुमित्रानन्दवर्धनम् । भव संरक्षणार्थाय सजने विजनेऽपि वा ॥ ९४ ॥
अवश्यं रक्षणं कार्यं मद्विधैर्विजने वने । अग्रतो गच्छ सौमित्रे सीता त्वामनुगच्छतु ॥ ९५ ॥
पृष्ठतोऽनुगमिष्यामि सीतां त्वां चानुपालयन् । अन्योन्यस्य हि नो रक्षा कर्तव्या पुरुषर्षभ ॥ ९६ ॥
नहि तावदतिक्रान्तासुकरा काचन क्रिया । अद्य दुःखं तु वैदेही वनवासस्य वेत्स्यति ॥ ९७ ॥
प्रनष्टजनसम्बाधं क्षेत्रारामविवर्जितम् । विषमं च प्रपातं च वनमद्य प्रवेक्ष्यति ॥ ९८ ॥

Praying to Ganga as aforesaid, the celebrated Sītā, who was irreproachable (in every way) and devoted to her husband, speedily reached the southern bank. (92) Having safely reached the (aforesaid) bank and leaving the boat, Śrī Rāma (a jewel among men), the chastiser of his foes, for his part, proceeded (further) with his (younger) brother (Lakṣmaṇa) and Sītā (a princess of the Videha kingdom). (93) The mighty-armed prince now said to Lakṣmaṇa (who heightened the joy of Sumitrā), "Be prepared for the protection of Sītā in the inhabited as well as in the uninhabited areas. (94) Protection needs must be afforded in an unin-habited forest to the weaker sex by men like me (who maintain the moral order). (Therefore) lead the way, O son of Sumitrā, (and) let Sītā follow you. (95) I (for my part) shall follow in the rear, protecting Sītā as well as yourself from behind; for protection must be vouchsafed by us to one another, O jewel among men ! (96) In fact no severe trial has gone out of possibility as yet. (On the other hand) Sītā (a princess of the Videha kingdom) will experience only today. the suffering entailed by a sojourn in the forest. (97) She will enter today a forest in which traces of blades of grass etc. having been crushed under the feet of men are no longer visible (there being no traffic of men), which is utterly devoid of fields and gardens, has a rugged surface and is full of yawning chasms etc." (98)

* According to the interpretation given above, which commands the support of a famous commentator of the Vālmīki-Rāmāyaṇa, the author of the gloss going by the name of "Rāmāyaṇa-Śiromaṇi", the compound 'सुरावटसहस्रेण' will have to be split up as 'सुरेषु देवेषु न घटन्ते न सन्तीत्यर्थः, तेषां सहस्रम् तेन'. The other compound 'मांसभूतौदनेन' too should be split up as 'मा नास्ति अंसो राजभागो यस्यां सा एव भूः पृथ्वी च उतं वस्त्रं च ओदनं च, एतेषां समाहारः, तेन'. Like 'Aṃśa', the word 'Aṃsa' too bears the sense of 'share' (revenue) according to Sanskrit lexicons.

Embodiments of Service

श्रुत्वा रामस्य वचनं प्रतस्थे लक्ष्मणोऽग्रतः । अनन्तरं च सीताया राघवो रघुनन्दनः ॥ ९९ ॥
गतं तु गङ्गापरपारमाशु रामं सुमन्त्रः सततं निरीक्ष्य ।
अध्वप्रकर्षाद् विनिवृत्तदृष्टिर्मुमोच बाष्पं व्यथितस्तपस्वी ॥१००॥
स लोकपालप्रतिमप्रभावस्तीर्त्वा महात्मा वरदो महानदीम् ।
ततः समृद्धाञ्शुभसस्यमालिनः क्षणेन वत्सान् मुदितानुपागमत् ॥१०१॥
तौ तत्र हत्वा चतुरो महामृगान् वराहमृश्यं पृषतं महारुरुम् ।
आदाय मेध्यं त्वरितं बुभुक्षितौ वासाय काले ययतुर्वनस्पतिम् ॥१०२॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे द्विपञ्चाशः सर्गः ॥ ५२ ॥

Hearing the advice of Śrī Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa led the way (Sītā following him), and immediately after Sītā followed Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu), the delight of the Raghus. (99) Constantly gazing on Śrī Rāma, who had soon reached the other bank of the Ganga, and his vision having failed due to the long distance (covered by the exiles in the meantime) Sumantra, who was full of remorse and afflicted (too), shed tears (of grief over his separation from Śrī Rāma). (100) Having crossed the great river (Ganga), the high-souled Śrī Rāma, who vied in glory with the guardians of the spheres and was capable of bestowing boons, thence reached in a moment the prosperous and happy land of Vatsa (the land comprised between the Ganga and the Yamuna rivers), which contained rows of beautiful crops. (101) Having hunted (for love of sport) four large deer, *viz*, a Varāha, Ṛśya, Pṛṣata and Mahāruru (the four principal species of deer), and taking (with them articles of) food (consisting of fruits etc.) fit for being consigned as an oblation into the sacred fire, now that they felt hungry (after sport), the two brothers quickly sought (the foot of) a tree (where they had evidently stationed Sītā within their sight for the time they were engaged in sport), for taking rest (after supper) during the night. (102)

Thus ends Canto Fifty-two in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

त्रिपञ्चाशः सर्गः

Canto LIII

Apprehending trouble for Kausalyā and others at the hands of Kaikeyī, Śrī Rāma, who was seated at the foot of a banyan tree and was a past master in the art of persuasion, persuades Lakṣmaṇa to the best of his ability to return to Ayodhya. Lakṣmaṇa, however, pleads inability to survive in his absence and does not budge an inch from his resolution to stay with his eldest brother. Śrī Rāma, therefore, yields and sets his seal to his continuing with him during his exile.

स तं वृक्षं समासाद्य संध्यामन्वास्य पश्चिमाम् । रामो रमयतां श्रेष्ठ इति होवाच लक्ष्मणम् ॥ १ ॥

अद्येयं प्रथमा रात्रिर्याता जनपदाद् बहिः । या सुमन्त्रेण रहिता तां नोत्कण्ठितुमर्हसि ॥ २ ॥
जागर्तव्यमतन्द्रिभ्यामद्यप्रभृति रात्रिषु । योगक्षेमौ हि सीताया वर्तेते लक्ष्मणावयोः ॥ ३ ॥
रात्रिं कथंचिदेवेमां सौमित्रे वर्तयामहे । अपवर्तामहे भूमावास्तीर्य स्वयमर्जितैः ॥ ४ ॥
स तु संविश्य मेदिन्यां महार्हशयनोचितः । इमाः सौमित्रये रामो व्याजहार कथाः शुभाः ॥ ५ ॥

Having reached (the foot of) the aforesaid tree and worshipped the evening twilight, Śrī Rāma, the foremost of those affording delight to others, spoke to Lakṣmaṇa as follows: so the tradition goes:— (1) "This night, which has overtaken us today outside the territory inhabited by our own people, is the first night which will pass without Sumantra. You ought not to sorrow over it. (2) Remaining free from lassitude we must both keep awake during the (coming) nights; for the procuration of what is needed by Sītā and the protection of her person and honour etc. are our care, O Lakṣmaṇa! (3) Let us pass this night anyhow, O son of Sumitrā! Let us lie down on the ground, covering it with straw, leaves and so on procured with our own hands." (4) Sitting on the (bare) ground, the said Śrī Rāma, for his part, who was accustomed to costly beds, addressed the following suitable remarks to Lakṣmaṇa:— (5)

ध्रुवमद्य महाराजो दुःखं स्वपिति लक्ष्मण । कृतकामा तु कैकेयी तुष्टा भवितुमर्हति ॥ ६ ॥
सा हि देवी महाराजं कैकेयी राज्यकारणात् । अपि न च्यावयेत् प्राणान् दृष्ट्वा भरतमागतम् ॥ ७ ॥
अनाथश्च हि वृद्धश्च मया चैव विना कृतः । किं करिष्यति कामात्मा कैकेय्या वशमागतः ॥ ८ ॥
इदं व्यसनमालोक्य राज्ञश्च मतिविभ्रमम् । काम एवार्थधर्माभ्यां गरीयानिति मे मतिः ॥ ९ ॥
को ह्यविद्वानपि पुमान् प्रमदायाः कृते त्यजेत् । छन्दानुवर्तिनं पुत्रं तातो मामिव लक्ष्मण ॥ १० ॥
सुखी बत सुभार्यश्च भरतः केकयीसुतः । मुदितान् कोसलानेको यो भोक्ष्यत्यधिराजवत् ॥ ११ ॥
स हि राज्यस्य सर्वस्य सुखमेकं भविष्यति । ताते तु वयसातीते मयि चारण्यमाश्रिते ॥ १२ ॥

"Surely the emperor must be sleeping uncomfortably to night, O Lakṣmaṇa! Kaikeyī, on the other hand, who has her desired object accomplished, ought to feel gratified. (6) Seeing Bharata returned (from his maternal grandfather's), Queen Kaikeyī, I am afraid, may not actually rob the emperor of his (very) life for the sake of sovereignty. (7) What will the king,—whose desire (to see me installed as Prince Regent) lingers (even now) in his mind and who has fallen into the clutches of Kaikeyī, (nay) who is aged and (therefore) helpless and has (further) been disunited from me,—do (to foil her designs upon his life)? (8) Viewing this evil plight (of mine) and the perversion of the king's mind, I (am led to) think that gratification of the senses is of greater moment than earthly gain and religious merit. (9) What man, even though ignorant, would actually abandon for the sake of a woman a son following his will, (even) as father has abandoned me, O Lakṣmaṇa? (10) Ah, Kaikeyī's son, Bharata (alone) is happy and the spouse of a lucky woman in that he is going to rule over the prosperous kingdom of Kosala like an overlord, his claim being disputed by none! (11) For, he will enjoy the undivided blessings of the entire kingdom, now that father is superannuated and I have retired to the forest. (12)

अर्थधर्मौ परित्यज्य यः काममनुवर्तते । एवमापद्यते क्षिप्रं राजा दशरथो यथा ॥ १३ ॥
मन्ये दशरथान्ताय मम प्रव्राजनाय च । कैकेयी सौम्य सम्प्राप्ता राज्याय भरतस्य च ॥ १४ ॥

Leaving the Ganga behind

अपीदानीं तु कैकेयी सौभाग्यमदमोहिता । कौसल्यां च सुमित्रां च सा प्रबाधेत मत्कृते ॥ १५ ॥
मातास्मत्कारणाद् देवी सुमित्रा दुःखमावसेत् । अयोध्यामित एव त्वं काले प्रविश लक्ष्मण ॥ १६ ॥
अहमेको गमिष्यामि सीतया सह दण्डकान् । अनाथाया हि नाथस्त्वं कौसल्याया भविष्यसि ॥ १७ ॥
क्षुद्रकर्मा हि कैकेयी द्वेषादन्यायमाचरेत् । परिदद्याद्धि धर्मज्ञ गरं ते मम मातरम् ॥ १८ ॥
नूनं जात्यन्तरे तात स्त्रियः पुत्रैर्वियोजिताः । जनन्या मम सौमित्रे तदद्यैतदुपस्थितम् ॥ १९ ॥

"He who pursues sensuous pleasure neglecting wealth and virtue soon comes to grief in the same way as King Daśaratha has. (13) I believe, O good brother, that Kaikeyī came (to this house) to bring about the end of Daśaratha, to send me into exile and to secure kingship for Bharata. (14) Blinded by pride of good fortune, I am afraid, the aforesaid Kaikeyī may even now persecute Kausalyā and Sumitrā too because of their relation with me (and you). (15) Your mother, Queen Sumitrā, is likely to suffer hardship because of her affinity to us. From this very place (therefore), O Lakṣmaṇa, proceed you to Ayodhya next morning. (16) I shall proceed to the Daṇḍaka forest alone with Sītā, while you will be a protector to Kausalyā, who will be left without a protector (after the death of King Daśaratha). (17) Kaikeyī of vile deeds may undoubtedly resort to unfair means due to malice and even administer poison to your mother and mine, O knower of what is right ! (18) In some other (past) birth, O dear brother, women must have been deprived of their sons by my mother (Kausalyā). That act (of hers alone), O Lakṣmaṇa (son of Sumitrā), has recoiled on her in the form of this visitation. (19)

मया हि चिरपुष्टेन दुःखसंवर्धितेन च । विप्रयुज्यत कौसल्या फलकाले धिगस्तु माम् ॥ २० ॥
मा स्म सीमन्तिनी काचिज्जनयेत् पुत्रमीदृशम् । सौमित्रे योऽहमम्बाया दद्मि शोकमनन्तकम् ॥ २१ ॥
मन्ये प्रीतिविशिष्टा सा मत्तो लक्ष्मण सारिका । यत्तस्याः श्रूयते वाक्यं शुक पादमरेर्दश ॥ २२ ॥
शोचन्त्याश्चाल्पभाग्याया न किंचिदुपकुर्वता । पुत्रेण किमपुत्राया मया कार्यमरिंदम ॥ २३ ॥
अल्पभाग्या हि मे माता कौसल्या रहिता मया । शेते परमदुःखार्ता पतिता शोकसागरे ॥ २४ ॥
एको ह्यहमयोध्यां च पृथिवीं चापि लक्ष्मण । तरेयमिषुभिः क्रुद्धो ननु वीर्यमकारणम् ॥ २५ ॥
अधर्मभयभीतश्च परलोकस्य चानघ । तेन लक्ष्मण नाद्याहमात्मानमभिषेचये ॥ २६ ॥

"At a time when Kausalyā (my mother) should have found her labours repaid by me, she has been deprived of my company by me, who was nurtured by her for long years and brought up with (great) pains. Woe to me ! (20) Let no matron give birth to such a son as myself, who, O Lakṣmaṇa, have inflicted endless sorrow on my mother ! (21) I believe that myna (which is kept as a pet by mother Kausalyā), O Lakṣmaṇa, is more affectionate (towards my mother) than I, since from her are heard the words 'Bite, O parrot, the foot of the enemy (of our master and thereby render him incapable of marching against our master).' (22) What purpose of my grieving mother of poor luck, who is as good as issueless, can be served by me, her son, who does no good to her, O chastiser of foes ? (23) Of poor luck indeed is my mother, Kausalyā, who, bereft as she is of me, is stricken with great agony and lies plunged in a sea of grief. (24) When enraged I can surely subdue with my arrows single-handed not only (the kingdom of) Ayodhya but the earth as well, O Lakṣmaṇa ! But

(show of) valour is not (always) conducive to good in the other world (25) I am afraid of sin (that will be incurred by me if I fail to help my father in implementing the boons conferred by him on Kaikeyī) as well as of (ruining my prospects in) the other world, O sinless Lakṣmaṇa ! Hence I do not install myself in the office of Prince Regent (by force) today." (26)

एतदन्यच्च करुणं विलप्य विजने बहु । अश्रुपूर्णमुखो दीनो निशि तूष्णीमुपाविशत् ॥ २७ ॥
विलापोपरतं रामं गतार्चिषमिवानलम् । समुद्रमिव निर्वेगमाश्वासयत लक्ष्मणः ॥ २८ ॥
ध्रुवमद्य पुरी राम अयोध्याऽऽयुधिनां वर । निष्प्रभा त्वयि निष्क्रान्ते गतचन्द्रेव शर्वरी ॥ २९ ॥
नैतदौपयिकं राम यदिदं परितप्यसे । विषादयसि सीतां च मां चैव पुरुषर्षभ ॥ ३० ॥
न च सीता त्वया हीना न चाहमपि राघव । मुहूर्तमपि जीवावो जलान्मत्स्याविवोद्धृतौ ॥ ३१ ॥
नहि तातं न शत्रुघ्नं न सुमित्रां परंतप । द्रष्टुमिच्छेयमद्याहं स्वर्गं चापि त्वया विना ॥ ३२ ॥

Having wailed piteously as aforesaid and in many other ways in that lonely forest, Śrī Rāma sat quiet during the night, afflicted as he was, his face bathed in tears. (27) Lakṣmaṇa comforted Śrī Rāma as follows when the latter had ceased lamenting and looked like a fire whose flames had gone out and a sea that had lost its vehemence:—(28) "The city of Ayodhya, O Rāma, now that you have come away from it, has undoubtedly been divested of its splendour and resembles a night without the moon, O jewel among armed warriors ! (29) It is not desirable, O Rāma, that you should grieve in this way. You make Sītā and myself too sad (thereby), O jewel among men ! (30) Bereft of you, O scion of Raghu, neither Sītā nor I myself can survive even for a short while any more than fish taken out of water. (31) Today I wish to see neither father nor Śatrughna (my younger brother) nor Sumitrā (my own mother) nor even heaven without you, O tormentor of foes !" (32)

ततस्तत्र समासीनौ नातिदूरे निरीक्ष्य ताम् । न्यग्रोधे सुकृतां शय्यां भेजाते धर्मवत्सलौ ॥ ३३ ॥
स लक्ष्मणस्योत्तमपुष्कलं वचो निशम्य चैवं वनवासमादरात् ।
समाः समस्ता विदधे परंतपः प्रपद्य धर्मं सुचिराय राघवः ॥ ३४ ॥
ततस्तु तस्मिन् विजने महाबलौ महावने राघववंशवर्धनौ ।
न तौ भयं सम्भ्रममभ्युपेयतुर्यथैव सिंहौ गिरिसानुगोचरौ ॥ ३५ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे त्रिपञ्चाशः सर्गः ॥ ५३ ॥

Perceiving a bed decently prepared (by Lakṣmaṇa) at the foot of the banyan tree not very far (from the place occupied by them), while they were comfortably seated there, Śrī Rāma and Sītā, who were tenderly alive to their duty, then sought the bed. (33) Hearing attentively the excellently-worded and comprehensive submission of Lakṣmaṇa reproduced above, and embracing for a fairly lengthy period the course of conduct prescribed for hermits, Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu), the tormentor of foes, resolved to spend all the years (of his exile) with Lakṣmaṇa. (34) Thenceforward the two exceptionally mighty princes (Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa), the promoters of the race of Raghu, never experienced fear or agitation (while dwelling) in that great lonely forest any more than a couple of lions living on a mountain-peak. (35)

Thus ends Canto Fifty-three in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

चतुःपञ्चाशः सर्गः

Canto LIV

Set out on his journey for the Daṇḍaka forest with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa, Śrī Rāma reaches at dusk the hermitage of Sage Bharadwāja in the vicinity of the confluence of the holy Ganga and Yamuna rivers. Paying due honours to Śrī Rāma and his party, the sage recommends Chitrakoot as the fittest place for him to sojourn in. Spending the night in discourses on various topics with him, the sage grants him leave early next morning to depart for Chitrakoot.

ते तु तस्मिन् महावृक्षे उषित्वा रजनीं शुभाम् । विमलेऽभ्युदिते सूर्ये तस्माद् देशात् प्रतस्थिरे ॥ १ ॥
यत्र भागीरथीं गङ्गां यमुनाभिप्रवर्तते । जग्मुस्तं देशमुद्दिश्य विगाह्य सुमहद् वनम् ॥ २ ॥
ते भूमिभागान् विविधान् देशांश्चापि मनोहरान् । अदृष्टपूर्वान् पश्यन्तस्तत्र तत्र यशस्विनः ॥ ३ ॥
यथा क्षेमेण सम्पश्यन् पुष्पितान् विविधान् द्रुमान् । निर्वृत्तमात्रे दिवसे रामः सौमित्रिमब्रवीत् ॥ ४ ॥
प्रयागमभितः पश्य सौमित्रे धूममुत्तमम् । अग्नेर्भगवतः केतुं मन्ये संनिहितो मुनिः ॥ ५ ॥
नूनं प्राप्ताः स्म सम्भेदं गङ्गायमुनयोर्वयम् । तथाहि श्रूयते शब्दो वारिणोर्वारिघर्षजः ॥ ६ ॥
दारूणि परिभिन्नानि वनजैरुपजीविभिः । छिन्नाश्चाप्याश्रमे चैते दृश्यन्ते विविधा द्रुमाः ॥ ७ ॥

Having spent the beautiful night under that big tree, the party for their part set out from that place when the sun had clearly risen. (1) Travelling across a fairly extensive forest they proceeded in the direction of that region where the Yamuna rushes to meet the Ganga (associated with the name of Emperor Bhagīratha, who had the credit of bringing down the stream to the terrestrial plane by dint of his devotion and austerities in order to purify the ashes of his departed great granduncles). (2) Beholding here and there various tracts of land and soul-captivating regions never seen before, the illustrious travellers moved on. (3) Gazing on the various trees laden with blossoms while travelling at ease, Śrī Rāma said to Lakṣmaṇa (son of Sumitrā) when the day had just ended:—"Behold, O son of Sumitrā, agreeable (fragrant) smoke, the emblem of the glorious god of fire, near Prayag (the confluence of the holy Ganga and Yamuna rivers). (From this) I conclude the sage (Bharadwāja) is at hand. (4-5) We have surely reached the confluence of the Ganga and Yamuna rivers; for the noise produced by the clashing of the waters of the two streams is heard. (6) Logs of wood hewn by men living by the produce of the forest, as also the trees of various kinds (thus) dismembered are seen in the hermitage here." (7)

धन्विनौ तौ सुखं गत्वा लम्बमाने दिवाकरे । गङ्गायमुनयोः संधौ प्रापतुर्निलयं मुनेः ॥ ८ ॥
रामस्त्वाश्रममासाद्य त्रासयन् मृगपक्षिणः । गत्वा मुहूर्तमध्वानं भरद्वाजमुपागमत् ॥ ९ ॥
ततस्त्वाश्रममासाद्य मुनेर्दर्शनकाङ्क्षिणौ । सीतयानुगतौ वीरौ दूरादेवावतस्थतुः ॥ १० ॥
स प्रविश्य महात्मानमृषिं शिष्यगणैर्वृतम् । संशितव्रतमेकाग्रं तपसा लब्धचक्षुषम् ॥ ११ ॥

of offshoots. (28) It is infested by the black species of monkeys with a long tail (of the size of a cow-tail), is haunted by apes and bears, is known by the name of Chitrakoot and closely resembles the Gandhamādana mountain (in beauty). (29) So long as a man beholds the peaks of the Chitrakoot hill he devotes himself entirely to virtuous acts and never sets his mind on sin. (30) Having spent a hundred winters in austerities as though in sport on that mountain, many a seer with a head hoary (through age) as a (bare) skull ascended to heaven. (31) I consider that mountain to be a very lonely and comfortable place for you to live in. Else dwell with me here (at the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna) for the period of exile. (32)

स रामं सर्वकामैस्तं भरद्वाजः प्रियातिथिम् । सभार्यं सह च भ्रात्रा प्रतिजग्राह हर्षयन् ॥ ३३ ॥
तस्य प्रयागे रामस्य तं महर्षिमुपेयुषः । प्रपन्ना रजनी पुण्या चित्राः कथयतः कथाः ॥ ३४ ॥
सीतातृतीयः काकुत्स्थः परिश्रान्तः सुखोचितः । भरद्वाजाश्रमे रम्ये तां रात्रिमवसत् सुखम् ॥ ३५ ॥
प्रभातायां तु शर्वर्यां भरद्वाजमुपागमत् । उवाच नरशार्दूलो मुनिं ज्वलिततेजसम् ॥ ३६ ॥
शर्वरीं भगवन्नद्य सत्यशील तवाश्रमे । उषिताः स्मोऽद्य वसतिमनुजानातु नो भवान् ॥ ३७ ॥
रात्र्यां तु तस्यां व्युष्टायां भरद्वाजोऽब्रवीदिदम् । मधुमूलफलोपेतं चित्रकूटं व्रजेति ह ॥ ३८ ॥
वासमौपयिकं मन्ये तव राम महाबल । नानानगगणोपेतः किंनरोरगसेवितः ॥ ३९ ॥
मयूरनादाभिरतो गजराजनिषेवितः । गम्यतां भवता शैलश्चित्रकूटः स विश्रुतः ॥ ४० ॥
पुण्यश्च रमणीयश्च बहुमूलफलायुतः । तत्र कुञ्जरयूथानि मृगयूथानि चैव हि ॥ ४१ ॥
विचरन्ति वनान्तेषु तानि द्रक्ष्यसि राघव ।
सरित्प्रस्रवणप्रस्थान् दरीकन्दरनिर्झरान् । चरतः सीतया सार्धं नन्दिष्यति मनस्तव ॥ ४२ ॥
प्रहृष्टकोयष्टिभकोकिलस्वनैर्विनोदयन्तं च सुखं परं शिवम् ।
मृगैश्च मत्तैर्बहुभिश्च कुञ्जरैः सुरम्यमासाद्य समावसाश्रयम् ॥ ४३ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे चतुःपञ्चाशः सर्गः ॥ ५४ ॥

The celebrated Sage Bharadwāja entertained his aforesaid beloved guest, Śrī Rāma, with his consort (Sītā) and with his (younger half-) brother (Lakṣmaṇa), delighting them with all desired objects. (33) While Śrī Rāma, having approached that great seer at Prayag (the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna), was talking (with him) on various topics, the delightful night arrived. (34) Greatly fatigued, Śrī Rāma (a scion of Kakutstha), who was accompanied by Sītā as the third (Lakṣmaṇa being the second) and deserved (all) comforts, happily spent that night at the lovely hermitage of Bharadwāja. (35) The night having ended in dawn, Śrī Rāma (a tiger among men) approached and spoke (as follows) to Sage Bharadwāja of resplendent glory:—(36) "We have lodged tonight at your hermitage, O venerable sir ! (Pray) allow you us to proceed to the place fixed for our abode now, O sage given to truthfulness !" (37) That night having come to an end, Bharadwāja (when requested as above) replied for his part, they say, as follows:—"Proceed gladly to Chitrakoot, rich in honey, roots and fruits. (38) I deem it a fit place for your abode, O Rāma possessed of great strength ! Repair you to that well-known sacred and lovely mountain, Chitrakoot, which is adorned with clusters of trees of every description

and frequented by Kinnaras and Nāgas, is rendered charming by the cries of peacocks and infested with lordly elephants and abounds in roots and fruits. Since herds of elephants as well as troops of deer roam about in the sylvan regions there, you will behold them, O scion of Raghu, as well as rivers, cascades, peaks of mountains, fissures in rocks, caves and rivulets, which will delight your mind as you roam about (in the woods) with Sītā. (39-42) Reaching the agreeable and highly blessed mountain, which entertains the visitors with the notes of the overjoyed Tittibha bird and cuckoo, is most delightful because of its many deer and elephants in rut and is fit for habitation, take up your abode on it. (43)

Thus ends Canto Fifty-four in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

पञ्चपञ्चाशः सर्गः

Canto LV

Sage Bharadwāja tells Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, even as they set out on their journey to Chitrakoot, the route by which they should proceed. Accompanied by Sītā Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa cross the Yamuna on a raft prepared by themselves. In the evening they halt on the bank of the Yamuna along with Sītā, who is rejoiced to get fruits and blossoms of her liking.

उषित्वा रजनीं तत्र राजपुत्रावरिंदमौ । महर्षिमभिवाद्याथ जग्मतुस्तं गिरिं प्रति ॥ १ ॥
तेषां स्वस्त्ययनं चैव महर्षिः स चकार ह । प्रस्थितान् प्रेक्ष्य तांश्चैव पिता पुत्रानिवौरसान् ॥ २ ॥
ततः प्रचक्रमे वक्तुं वचनं स महामुनिः । भरद्वाजो महातेजा रामं सत्यपराक्रमम् ॥ ३ ॥
गङ्गायमुनयोः संधिमासाद्य मनुजर्षभौ । कालिन्दीमनुगच्छेतां नदीं पश्चान्मुखाश्रिताम् ॥ ४ ॥
अथासाद्य तु कालिन्दीं प्रतिस्रोतः समागताम् ।
तस्यास्तीर्थं प्रचरितं प्रकामं प्रेक्ष्य राघव । तत्र यूयं प्लवं कृत्वा तरतांशुमतीं नदीम् ॥ ५ ॥
ततो न्यग्रोधमासाद्य महान्तं हरितच्छदम् । परीतं बहुभिर्वृक्षैः श्यामं सिद्धोपसेवितम् ॥ ६ ॥
तस्मिन् सीताञ्जलिं कृत्वा प्रयुञ्जीताशिषां क्रियाम् । समासाद्य च तं वृक्षं वसेद् वातिक्रमेत वा ॥ ७ ॥
क्रोशमात्रं ततो गत्वा नीलं प्रेक्ष्य च काननम् । सल्लकीबदरीमिश्रं रम्यं वंशैश्च यामुनैः ॥ ८ ॥
स पन्थाश्चित्रकूटस्य गतस्य बहुशो मया । रम्यो मार्दवयुक्तश्च दावैश्चैव विवर्जितः ॥ ९ ॥

Having spent the night there (at the hermitage of Sage Bharadwāja) and greeting the great seer, the two princes (Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa), the subduers of their foes, forthwith proceeded in the direction of the said mountain. (1) Nay, perceiving the (three) travellers about to start (on their journey), that great seer too, so the tradition goes, performed a religious rite ensuring their safe journey (scattering boiled rice on the ground and invoking blessings through the repetition of certain sacred texts) in the same way as a father would bless his own sons (and daughter-in-law). (2) Then that eminent sage, Bharadwāja, who was invested with

great (spiritual) glory, proceeded to instruct Śrī Rāma, who was possessed of unfailing valour, as follows:—(3) "Reaching the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna, the two jewels among men (in you) should follow the river Yamuna, which has taken a westerly course (for some distance due to the great rush of the waters of the Ganga) (4) Then, approaching the Yamuna turned in an opposite direction, and carefully perceiving in it a passage (across the river) too much frequented, O scion of Raghu, cross you the river Yamuna (the deity presiding over which is a daughter of the sun-god) after preparing a raft. (5) Then, approaching an extensive banyan tree, full of dark green leaves and (therefore) going by the name of Śyāma (dark-green), (nay) surrounded by many (other) trees and visited by Siddhas, Sītā should, joining her palms, offer prayers to (the deity presiding over) the tree (for your safe return to Ayodhya). Again, duly reaching (the foot of) the aforesaid tree, she should halt (there awhile in the event of her feeling fatigued) or else pass beyond it. (6-7) After walking (a distance of) only two miles from that tree and beholding the Nīlavana, interspersed with Sallakī and jujube trees and charming with bamboos standing on the bank of the Yamuna, will be found that delightful way to Chitrakoot,—which has frequently been visited by me,—marked with smoothness and devoid of forest fires." (8-9)

इति पन्थानमादिश्य महर्षिः संन्यवर्तत । अभिवाद्य तथेत्युक्त्वा रामेण विनिवर्तितः ॥ १० ॥
उपावृत्ते मुनौ तस्मिन् रामो लक्ष्मणमब्रवीत् । कृतपुण्याः स्म भद्रं ते मुनिर्यन्नोऽनुकम्पते ॥ ११ ॥
इति तौ पुरुषव्याघ्रौ मन्त्रयित्वा मनस्विनौ । सीतामेवाग्रतः कृत्वा कालिन्दीं जग्मतुर्नदीम् ॥ १२ ॥
अथासाद्य तु कालिन्दीं शीघ्रस्रोतस्विनीं नदीम् । चिन्तामापेदिरे सद्यो नदीजलतितीर्षवः ॥ १३ ॥
तौ काष्ठसंघाटमथो चक्रतुः सुमहाप्लवम् । शुष्कैर्वंशैः समाकीर्णमुशीरैश्च समावृतम् ॥ १४ ॥
ततो वैतसशाखाश्च जम्बुशाखाश्च वीर्यवान् । चकार लक्ष्मणश्छित्त्वा सीतायाः सुखमासनम् ॥ १५ ॥
तत्र श्रियमिवाचिन्त्यां रामो दाशरथिः प्रियाम् । ईषत्स लज्जमानां तामध्यारोपयत प्लवम् ॥ १६ ॥
पार्श्वे तत्र च वैदेह्या वसने भूषणानि च । प्लवे कठिनकाजं च रामश्चक्रे समाहितः ॥ १७ ॥
आरोप्य सीतां प्रथमं संघाटं परिगृह्य तौ । ततः प्रतेरतुर्यत्तौ प्रीतौ दशरथात्मजौ ॥ १८ ॥

Having thus pointed out the way (to Chitrakoot) and being urged by Śrī Rāma to return, after he had greeted the sage and said "I shall follow your instructions", the great seer (Bharadwāja) duly returned. (10) The aforesaid sage having returned, Śrī Rāma said to Lakṣmaṇa, "May prosperity attend on you ! We have done meritorious deeds (in the past) in that the sage compassionates us." (11) Talking as aforesaid, and placing Sītā definitely at their head, the two high-minded tigers among men headed towards the river Yamuna. (12) Reaching (the bank of) the river Yamuna, which flowed in a swift current, the (princely) travellers for their part fell a pondering, keen as they were to cross speedily the waters of the river. (13) The two brothers then prepared a fairly big raft consisting of a number of wooden logs (placed side by side), overspread with dry bamboos and covered all over with the fragrant roots of the Uśīra plant (Andropogon muricatus). (14) Then, cutting shoots of canes and twigs of the rose-apple tree, the powerful Lakṣmaṇa made a comfortable seat for Sītā. (15) Then the celebrated

Mounting a Raft for crossing the Yamuna

Śrī Rāma, son of Daśaratha, helped Sītā, his beloved consort,—who vied with Śrī (the goddess of fortune) of unimaginable beauty and was feeling a bit abashed,—ascend the raft. (16) Śrī Rāma also carefully placed on the aforesaid raft the pair of her garments as well as her jewels as also the shovel and basket beside her. (17) Having first enabled Sītā to ascend the raft, holding the structure (themselves), the two sons of Daśaratha, full of delight, now cautiously began to row the raft. (18)

कालिन्दीमध्यमायाता सीता त्वेनामवन्दत । स्वस्ति देवि तरामि त्वां पारयेन्मे पतिर्व्रतम् ॥ १९ ॥
यक्ष्ये त्वां गोसहस्रेण सुराघटशतेन च । स्वस्ति प्रत्यागते रामे पुरीमिक्ष्वाकुपालिताम् ॥ २० ॥
कालिन्दीमथ सीता तु याचमाना कृताञ्जलिः । तीरमेवाभिसम्प्राप्ता दक्षिणं वरवर्णिनी ॥ २१ ॥
ततः प्लवेनांशुमतीं शीघ्रगामूर्मिमालिनीम् । तीरजैर्बहुभिर्वृक्षैः संतेरुर्यमुनां नदीम् ॥ २२ ॥
ते तु प्लवमुत्सृज्य प्रस्थाय यमुनावनात् । श्यामं न्यग्रोधमासेदुः शीतलं हरितच्छदम् ॥ २३ ॥
न्यग्रोधं समुपागम्य वैदेही चाभ्यवन्दत । नमस्तेऽस्तु महावृक्ष पारयेन्मे पतिर्व्रतम् ॥ २४ ॥
कौसल्यां चैव पश्येम सुमित्रां च यशस्विनीम् । इति सीताञ्जलिं कृत्वा पर्यगच्छन्मनस्विनी ॥ २५ ॥
अवलोक्य ततः सीतामायाचन्तीमनिन्दिताम् । दयितां च विधेयां च रामो लक्ष्मणमब्रवीत् ॥ २६ ॥
सीतामादाय गच्छ त्वमग्रतो भरतानुज । पृष्ठतोऽनुगमिष्यामि सायुधो द्विपदां वर ॥ २७ ॥
यद् यत् फलं प्रार्थयते पुष्पं वा जनकात्मजा । तत् तत् प्रयच्छ वैदेह्या यत्रास्या रमते मनः ॥ २८ ॥
एकैकं पादपं गुल्मं लतां वा पुष्पशालिनीम् । अदृष्टरूपां पश्यन्ती रामं पप्रच्छ साबला ॥ २९ ॥
रमणीयान् बहुविधान् पादपान् कुसुमोत्करान् । सीतावचनसंरब्ध आनयामास लक्ष्मणः ॥ ३० ॥
विचित्रवालुकजलां हंससारसनादिताम् । रेमे जनकराजस्य सुता प्रेक्ष्य तदा नदीम् ॥ ३१ ॥
क्रोशमात्रं ततो गत्वा भ्रातरौ रामलक्ष्मणौ । बहून् मेध्यान् मृगान् हत्वा चेरतुर्यमुनावने ॥ ३२ ॥
विहृत्य ते बर्हिणपूगनादिते शुभे वने वारणवानरायुते ।
समं नदीवप्रमुपेत्य सत्वरं निवासमाजग्मुरदीनदर्शनाः ॥ ३३ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे पञ्चपञ्चाशः सर्गः ॥ ५५ ॥

Arrived in mid stream, Sītā for her part saluted the deity presiding over the stream and prayed to her (as follows):—"May I safely cross your waters (with my husband and brother-in-law), O glorious lady; and let my husband conclude his vow (of spending fourteen years in exile in the forest). (19) When Śrī Rāma safely returns to the city (of Ayodhya) ruled over by the Ikṣwākus, I shall propitiate you by offering a thousand cows and a hundred (and one) articles of worship which cannot be procured even by gods." (20) Even while praying to the river Kālindī (in the aforesaid words) with joined palms, Sītā, for her part, who was possessed of a most excellent complexion, forthwith approached the southern bank (of the Yamuna) itself. (21) Thus they duly crossed by means of a raft the rippling and swift-going Yamuna river, daughter of the sun-god, fringed with numerous trees sprung on its banks. (22) Leaving the raft in the midst of those trees and departing from the forest on the bank of the Yamuna, they reached the cool banyan tree, clothed with green leaves and (accordingly) bearing the name of Śyāma. (23) Nay, going very near the banyan tree, Sītā (a princess of the Videha dynasty) bowed low to it and said, "Hail to you, O gigantic tree ! Let my husband conclude his vow (of forest life) and let us see (once more) mother Kausalyā as well

as the illustrious Sumitrā" So saying and joining her palms, the high-minded Sītā went round the banyan tree clockwise. (24-25) Seeing his beloved and obedient consort, Sītā, of unimpeachable conduct, offering prayers (to the deity presiding over the banyan tree), Śrī Rāma now said to Lakṣmaṇa, "Taking Sītā (with you) walk you in the van, O Lakṣmaṇa (younger brother of Bharata) ! Equipped with arms I shall follow in the rear, O jewel among men ! (26-27) Offer to Sītā (a princess of the Videha clan) whatever fruit or flower the daughter of Janaka asks for and in which her mind finds delight." (28) Beholding every single tree, shrub or creeper, charming with blossoms, that she had never seen (before), that lady questioned Śrī Rāma about it. (29) Seized with a flurry on hearing Sītā's command, Lakṣmaṇa fetched lovely twigs of various trees, bearing bunches fo flowers. (30) The daughter of King Janaka rejoiced to gaze at that time on the river distinguished with charming sands and waters and rendered noisy by swans and cranes. (31) Having walked only a couple of miles from that place and killed many a consecrated deer, the two brothers, Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, roamed about in the forest on the bank of the Yamuna. (32) Having diverted themselves in the charming forest, made noisy by flocks of peacocks and infested with monkeys and elephants, and reaching a level ground on the bank of the river, the (princely) travellers, who wore an undepressed look, quickly sought a tree fit for abode. (33)

Thus ends Canto Fifty-five in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

षट्पञ्चाशः सर्गः

Canto LVI

Moving further next morning and rejoicing on the way to see the loveliness of the forest, the party reaches Chitrakoot and enters the hermitage of Vālmiki. Making up his mind to sojourn there with the permission of the sage, Śrī Rāma gets Lakṣmaṇa to erect a hut of leaves for themselves and, worshipping the deities presiding over the structure, they solemnly enter their abode at a propitious hour.

अथ रात्र्यां व्यतीतायामवसुप्तमनन्तरम् । प्रबोधयामास शनैर्लक्ष्मणं रघुपुंगवः ॥ १ ॥
सौमित्रे शृणु वन्यानां वल्गु व्याहरतां स्वनम् । सम्प्रतिष्ठामहे कालः प्रस्थानस्य परंतप ॥ २ ॥
प्रसुप्तस्तु ततो भ्रात्रा समये प्रतिबोधितः । जहौ निद्रां च तन्द्रां च प्रसक्तं च परिश्रमम् ॥ ३ ॥
तत उत्थाय ते सर्वे स्पृष्ट्वा नद्याः शिवं जलम् । पन्थानमृषिणादिष्टं चित्रकूटस्य तं ययुः ॥ ४ ॥
ततः सम्प्रस्थितः काले रामः सौमित्रिणा सह । सीतां कमलपत्राक्षीमिदं वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ ५ ॥

The night having slipped past, Śrī Rama (a jewel among the Raghus) now gently roused (in the following words) Lakṣmaṇa, who lay asleep for a second time after waking from sleep.—(1) "Hear, O Lakṣmaṇa (son of Sumitrā), the notes of sweetly warbling wild birds (the parrot, the cuckoo, myna and so on). Let us duly resume our journey as the hour for departure has commenced, O tormentor of enemies ! (2) Awakened in time by his (eldest) brother (Śrī Rāma), Lakṣmaṇa, who was fast asleep, for his part, immediately shook off his slumber, drowsiness and fatigue consequent on the (previous day's) journey. (3) Getting up and bathing in the cool waters of the Yamuna, they all then proceeded on the aforesaid path to Chitrakoot, trodden by the seers. (4) Having duly set out with Lakṣmaṇa (son of Sumitrā) at that time, Śrī Rāma spoke as follows to the lotus-eyed Sītā—(5)

आदीप्तानिव वैदेहि सर्वतः पुष्पितान् नगान् । स्वैः पुष्पैः किंशुकान् पश्य मालिनः शिशिरात्यये ॥ ६ ॥
पश्य भल्लातकान् बिल्वान् नरैरनुपसेवितान् । फलपुष्पैरवनतान् नूनं शक्ष्याम जीवितुम् ॥ ७ ॥
पश्य द्रोणप्रमाणानि लम्बमानानि लक्ष्मण । मधूनि मधुकारीभिः सम्भृतानि नगे नगे ॥ ८ ॥
एष क्रोशति नत्यूहस्तं शिखी प्रतिकूजति । रमणीये वनोद्देशे पुष्पसंस्तरसंकटे ॥ ९ ॥
मातङ्गयूथानुसृतं पक्षिसंघानुनादितम् । चित्रकूटमिमं पश्य प्रवृद्धशिखरं गिरिम् ॥ १० ॥
समभूमितले रम्ये द्रुमैर्बहुभिरावृते । पुण्ये रंस्यामहे तात चित्रकूटस्य कानने ॥ ११ ॥
ततस्तौ पादचारेण गच्छन्तौ सह सीतया । रम्यमासेदतुः शैलं चित्रकूटं मनोरमम् ॥ १२ ॥
तं तु पर्वतमासाद्य नानापक्षिगणायुतम् । बहुमूलफलं रम्यं सम्पन्नसरसोदकम् ॥ १३ ॥
मनोज्ञोऽयं गिरिः सौम्य नानाद्रुमलतायुतः । बहुमूलफलो रम्यः स्वाजीवः प्रतिभाति मे ॥ १४ ॥
मुनयश्च महात्मानो वसन्त्यस्मिञ्शिलोच्चये । अयं वासो भवेत् तात वयमत्र वसेमहि ॥ १५ ॥

"See, O Sītā (a princess of the Videha clan), the Kiṁśuka (Butea frondosa) trees laden with blossoms on all sides and appearing as though illumined and adorned with garlands (as it were) due to (the rows of) their flowers in this vernal season (synchronizing with the close of winter). (6) Look at the marking-nut and Bel trees, not made use of by men (being out of their reach) and bent low under the weight of their fruit and blossoms. We shall surely be able to live (through). (7) Behold hanging from every tree honeycombs equal in weight to a Droṇa (sixteen seers) and (constructed and) stocked (with honey) by bees, O Lakṣmaṇa ! (8) Here is a Chātaka bird crying and a peacock responding to it in a charming part of the forest thick with a scattered mass of flowers. (9) Look at this Chitrakoot hill with elevated peaks, a hill infested with herds of elephants and rendered noisy by flocks of birds. (10) We shall sport, dear brother, in the lovely and holy forest of Chitrakoot consisting of level grounds and covered by many trees." (11) Going on foot with Sītā, the two brothers then reached the delightful and soul-captivating Chitrakoot hill. (12) Reaching that lovely mountain, abounding in flocks of birds of many kinds and having a rich stock of roots and fruits and having sweet water in abundance, Śrī Rāma for his part said to Lakṣmaṇa, "Soul-captivating is this delightful mountain adorned with many trees and creepers and abounds in roots and fruits. To me it appears to be a place where sustenance could be found with ease, O gentle brother ! (13-14) High-souled ascetics too dwell on this mountain. It may prove habitable, O dear brother ! Let us take up our abode here." (15)

इति सीता च रामश्च लक्ष्मणश्च कृताञ्जलिः । अभिगम्याश्रमं सर्वे वाल्मीकिमभिवादयन् ॥ १६ ॥
तान् महर्षिः प्रमुदितः पूजयामास धर्मवित् । आस्यतामिति चोवाच स्वागतं तं निवेद्य च ॥ १७ ॥
ततोऽब्रवीन्महाबाहुर्लक्ष्मणं लक्ष्मणाग्रजः । संनिवेद्य यथान्यायमात्मानमृषये प्रभुः ॥ १८ ॥
लक्ष्मणानय दारूणि दृढानि च वराणि च । कुरुष्वावसथं सौम्य वासे मेऽभिरतं मनः ॥ १९ ॥
तस्य तद् वचनं श्रुत्वा सौमित्रिर्विविधान् द्रुमान् । आजहार ततश्चक्रे पर्णशालामरिंदमः ॥ २० ॥
तां निष्ठितां बद्धकटां दृष्ट्वा रामः सुदर्शनाम् । शुश्रूषमाणमेकाग्रमिदं वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ २१ ॥

Saying so and entering the hermitage (of Vālmīki), Sītā and Śrī Rāma, and with joined palms Lakṣmaṇa too greeted Sage Vālmīki. (16) Greatly delighted and offering welcome to Śrī Rāma (the principal guest), the eminent sage (Vālmīki), who knew what is right, received them with honour and said, "Be seated !" (17) Duly presenting himself to the seer according to the rules of propriety (obtaining in those days), the powerful Śrī Rāma of mighty arms, the eldest brother of Lakṣmaṇa, then spoke (as follows) to Lakṣmaṇa:—(18) 'Fetch, O Lakṣmaṇa, strong and excellent logs of wood and erect a hut, O gentle brother ! My mind is intent on dwelling here." (19) Hearing his aforesaid command, Lakṣmaṇa (son of Sumitrā) brought boughs of various trees and with them the prince, a subduer of his foes, erected a hut of leaves. (20) Seeing the hut consolidated (with a wall of strong wooden stakes) and thatched and charming to look at, Śrī Rāma spoke as follows to Lakṣmaṇa (who stood listening with rapt attention):—(21)

ऐणेयं मांसमाहृत्य शालां यक्ष्यामहे वयम् । कर्तव्यं वास्तुशमनं सौमित्रे चिरजीविभिः ॥ २२ ॥
मृगं हत्वाऽऽनय क्षिप्रं लक्ष्मणेह शुभेक्षण । कर्तव्यः शास्त्रदृष्टो हि विधिर्धर्ममनुस्मर ॥ २३ ॥
भ्रातुर्वचनमाज्ञाय लक्ष्मणः परवीरहा । चकार च यथोक्तं हि तं रामः पुनरब्रवीत् ॥ २४ ॥
ऐणेयं श्रपयस्वैतच्छालां यक्ष्यामहे वयम् । त्वर सौम्यमुहूर्तोऽयं ध्रुवश्च दिवसो ह्ययम् ॥ २५ ॥
स लक्ष्मणः कृष्णमृगं हत्वा मेध्यं प्रतापवान् । अथ चिक्षेप सौमित्रिः समिद्धे जातवेदसि ॥ २६ ॥
तत् तु पक्वं समाज्ञाय निष्टप्तं छिन्नशोणितम् । लक्ष्मणः पुरुषव्याघ्रमथ राघवमब्रवीत् ॥ २७ ॥
अयं सर्वः समस्ताङ्गः शृतः कृष्णमृगो मया । देवता देवसंकाश यजस्व कुशलो ह्यसि ॥ २८ ॥

"Fetching the pulp* of the bulb known by the name of Gajakanda we shall propitiate the deity presiding over the hut (roasting the pulp and offering it as an oblation to the deity). The rite of appeasing the (evil) spirits haunting a newly-erected structure must be gone through by those wishing to live long. (22) Digging out the bulb† known by the name of Gajakanda,

* The words 'ऐणेयं मांसम्' in the above verse has been purposely taken to mean the pulp of the bulb known by the name of Gajakanda; for if the words are interpreted otherwise in the sense of the meat of a deer, such an interpretation would expose Śrī Rāma to self-contradiction inasmuch as he has already signified his intention in the presence of his own beloved mother "to live on bulbs, roots and fruits (alone) during the period of his exile in the forest, forswearing meat like ascetics" (II. xx. 29), reiterated this intention to live on fruits and roots to his father in II. xxxiv. 59 and repeated the thing once more to Sage Bharadwāja in II. liv. 16. And since it has been said by the poet himself in praise of Śrī Rāma elsewhere that he never altered his statement (रामो द्विर्नाभिभाषते) and firmly adhered to his utterances, he could not even be conceived to have gone back upon his word.

† The *Madanapāla-Nighaṇṭu* treats the word 'मृग' as an equivalent of the bulb named Gajakanda.

bring it here at once, O fair-eyed Lakṣmaṇa; for the procedure laid down in the scriptures must be observed. (Always) mind your sacred obligations." (23) Clearly perceiving the command of his (eldest) brother, the aforesaid Lakṣmaṇa, the destroyer of hostile warriors, actually did as he was told and Śrī Rāma said to him again, "Dress this bulb, we shall propitiate the deities (the fire-god, Parjanya and so on, numbering fifty) presiding over the hut (by offering the dressed bulb to them). Look sharp ! The current is a propitious hour and this day too bears the name of 'Dhruva'* (undying)." (24-25) Unearthing the bulb, which has a black peel and is fit for being offered as an oblation to gods, the aforesaid Lakṣmaṇa, son of Sumitrā, full of glory as he was, forthwith cast it into a blazing fire. (26) Having definitely come to know that its pulp had been fully roasted and dressed and divested of its ruddy colour, Lakṣmaṇa now submitted (as follows) to Śrī Rāma, a tiger among men.—(27) "This bulb, known by the name of Gajakanda and endowed with a black peel, and by which all † disordered limbs are put right, has been fully dressed by me. (Pray) propitiate the gods (presiding over the hut by offering it as an oblation to them), inasmuch as you are well-versed in the rite, O brother vying with gods (in glory) !" (28)

रामः स्नात्वा तु नियतो गुणवाञ्जपकोविदः । संग्रहेणाकरोत् सर्वान् मन्त्रान् सत्रावसानिकान् ॥ २९ ॥
इष्ट्वा देवगणान सर्वान् विवेशावसथं शुचिः । बभूव च मनोह्लादो रामस्यामिततेजसः ॥ ३० ॥
वैश्वदेवबलिं कृत्वा रौद्रं वैष्णवमेव च । वास्तुसंशमनीयानि मङ्गलानि प्रवर्तयन् ॥ ३१ ॥
जपं च न्यायतः कृत्वा स्नात्वा नद्यां यथाविधि । पापसंशमनं रामश्चकार बलिमुत्तमम् ॥ ३२ ॥
वेदिस्थलविधानानि चैत्यान्यायतनानि च । आश्रमस्यानुरूपाणि स्थापयामास राघवः ॥ ३३ ॥
तां वृक्षपर्णच्छदनां मनोज्ञां यथाप्रदेशं सुकृतां निवाताम् ।
वासाय सर्वे विविशुः समेताः सभां यथा देवगणाः सुधर्माम् ॥ ३४ ॥
सुरम्यमासाद्य तु चित्रकूटं नदीं च ता माल्यवती सुतीर्थाम् ।
ननन्द हृष्टो मृगपक्षिजुष्टां जहौ च दुःखं पुरविप्रवासात् ॥ ३५ ॥

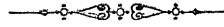
इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे षट्पञ्चाशः सर्गः ॥ ५६ ॥

Having finished his bath and fully disciplined as he was, Śrī Rāma, for his part, who was full of virtues and well-versed in the sacred texts to be muttered on the occasion, went through in brief the ceremony of Vāstu-Śānti, reciting the sacred texts bearing on the conclusion of a sacrificial performance. (29) Having propitiated all the hosts of gods presiding over the (newly-erected) hut and (thus) purified, Śrī Rāma entered the hut. Nay, (great) satisfaction of mind was caused (thereby) to Śrī Rāma, who was possessed of immense glory. (30) Having bathed in the river (Mandākinī) according to the procedure laid down in the scriptures and muttered sacred texts (such as the Gāyatrī) in the right way, and intending as he did to perform solemn rites calculated to ward off the evils attendant on a new construction, Śrī Rāma offered excellent oblations to Lord Rudra and Lord Viṣṇu too after

*** According to the popular astrological work 'Muhūrta-Chintāmaṇi' the three lunar mansions bearing the part name of Uttarā, *viz,* Uttarā Phālguni, Uttarāṣāḍhā and Uttarā Bhādrapadā, and Rohiṇī, as well as Sunday are spoken of as 'Dhruva' and 'Sthita'. They are looked upon as auspicious for Graha-Śānti, Vāstu-Śānti etc.**

† **The compound word 'समस्ताङ्गः' should be split up** as 'सम्यग् भवन्ति अस्तानि अङ्गानि येन सः' ।

performing the Vaiśwadeva (a religious ceremony which ought to be performed every morning and evening and especially before the midday meal and consists in homage paid to the Viśwedevas followed by Baliharaṇa or offering of small portions of cooked food to the gods who give the food and especially to the god of fire, who cooks the food for us and bears the offering to heaven). (31-32) Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) erected and consecrated altars of a size proportionate to the hut for offering oblations to the eight guardians of the quarters and the intermediate points and Chaityas (places of worship for Gaṇeśa and other gods) and Āyatanas (places for worship for Lord Viṣṇu and others). (33) (Even) as multitudes of gods entered their assembly hall named Sudharmā (in heaven), all (the three princely exiles) entered together for habitation the aforesaid soul-captivating hut, thatched with the leaves of trees, erected well on a suitable site and sheltered from winds. (34) Rejoiced to reach the exceedingly delightful Chitrakoot and the celebrated river, Mālyavatī (Mandākinī), which was provided with good descents and was sought by beasts and birds, Śrī Rāma for his part rejoiced and shed the agony caused by his exile from the city (of Ayodhya). (35)

Thus ends Canto Fifty-six in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

सप्तपञ्चाशः सर्गः

Canto LVII

Having been told of Śrī Rāma's departure for Chitrakoot by the spies of Guha and taking leave of the latter, Sumantra drives back to Ayodhya. Entering the royal gynaeceum, he submits to the emperor what he reported earlier to the citizens who followed his chariot. Daśaratha and Kausalyā fall into a swoon to hear about Śrī Rāma's departure for Chitrakoot, and all the inmates of the gynaeceum burst into a wail from agony.

कथयित्वा तु दुःखार्तः सुमन्त्रेण चिरं सह । रामे दक्षिणकूलस्थे जगाम स्वगृहं गुहः ॥ १ ॥
भरद्वाजाभिगमनं प्रयागे च सभाजनम् । आ गिरेर्गमनं तेषां तत्रस्थैरभिलक्षितम् ॥ २ ॥
अनुज्ञातः सुमन्त्रोऽथ योजयित्वा हयोत्तमान् । अयोध्यामेव नगरीं प्रययौ गाढदुर्मनाः ॥ ३ ॥
स वनानि सुगन्धीनि सरितश्च सरांसि च । पश्यन् यत्तो ययौ शीघ्रं ग्रामाणि नगराणि च ॥ ४ ॥
ततः सायाह्नसमये द्वितीयेऽहनि सारथिः । अयोध्यां समनुप्राप्य निरानन्दां ददर्श ह ॥ ५ ॥
स शून्यामिव निःशब्दां दृष्ट्वा परमदुर्मनाः । सुमन्त्रश्चिन्तयामास शोकवेगसमाहतः ॥ ६ ॥
कच्चिन्न सगजा साश्वा सजना सजनाधिपा । रामसंतापदुःखेन दग्धा शोकाग्निना पुरी ॥ ७ ॥

Having talked long with Sumantra (on the virtues of Śrī Rāma), Guha for his part, stricken as he was with agony (due to separation from Śrī Rāma), left for his home when Śrī Rāma set his foot on the southern bank of the Ganga. (1)

The meeting (of Śrī Rāma and others) with Bharadwāja at Prayag and their reception (by the latter) as well as their journey up to the Chitrakoot hill was witnessed by the spies (of Guha) at Sringaverpur (and reported to Sumantra). (2) Therefore, yoking the excellent horses to his chariot, when granted leave (by Guha), Sumantra drove straight to Ayodhya, deeply disconsolate at heart. (3) Viewing woodlands diffusing sweet odours, rivers and lakes, villages and cities, the charioteer carefully drove along at a quick speed. (4) Duly reaching Ayodhya at dusk on the second day (since his departure from Sringaverpur), the charioteer found it cheerless: so it is said. (5) Greatly troubled in mind to see Ayodhya noiseless as though desolate, and overpowered with the vehemence of grief, Sumantra reflected:—(6) "I hope the city (of Ayodhya) with its elephants, horses, people and sovereign has not been consumed by the fire of grief caused by the agony of separation from Śrī Rāma." (7)

इति चिन्तापरः सूतो वाजिभिः शीघ्रयायिभिः । नगरद्वारमासाद्य त्वरितः प्रविवेश ह ॥ ८ ॥
सुमन्त्रमभियान्तं तं शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः । क्व राम इति पृच्छन्तः सूतमभ्यद्रवन् नराः ॥ ९ ॥
तेषां शशंस गङ्गायामहमापृच्छ्य राघवम् । अनुज्ञातो निवृत्तोऽस्मि धार्मिकेण महात्मना ॥ १० ॥
ते तीर्णा इति विज्ञाय बाष्पपूर्णमुखा नराः । अहो धिगिति निःश्वस्य हा रामेति विचुक्रुशुः ॥ ११ ॥
शुश्राव च वचस्तेषां बृन्दं बृन्दं च तिष्ठताम् । हताः स्म खलु ये नेह पश्याम इति राघवम् ॥ १२ ॥
दानयज्ञविवाहेषु समाजेषु महत्सु च । न द्रक्ष्यामः पुनर्जातु धार्मिकं राममन्तरा ॥ १३ ॥
किं समर्थं जनस्यास्य किं प्रियं किं सुखावहम् । इति रामेण नगरं पित्रेव परिपालितम् ॥ १४ ॥

Reaching the city gate by the chariot driven by swift-going horses, while pondering thus, the charioteer they say hastily entered the city. (8) Inquiring where Śrī Rāma was, people forthwith rushed in their hundreds and thousands towards Sumantra, who was driving in the direction of the palace. (9) He replied to them, "Taking leave of Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu), when sent back by that pious and lofty-minded prince, on the bank of the Ganga (at Sringaverpur), I have returned (from that place)." (10) Coming to know for certain that the exiles had crossed the Ganga, and sighing with the words "Oh, fie upon us !" people with their faces bathed in tears cried aloud, "Ah Rāma !" (11) Nay, he heard the lament of the people, who stood in batches saying, "Doomed indeed are we, who do not perceive Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) in this chariot ! (12) (Alas) we shall never see the pious Śrī Rāma in our midst again on the occasions of bestowing gifts, sacrificial performances and weddings nor in large gatherings. (13) The citizens of Ayodhya were looked after by Śrī Rāma as by a father with due regard to what was conducive to one's good, what was agreeable to an individual and what brought happiness to one." (14)

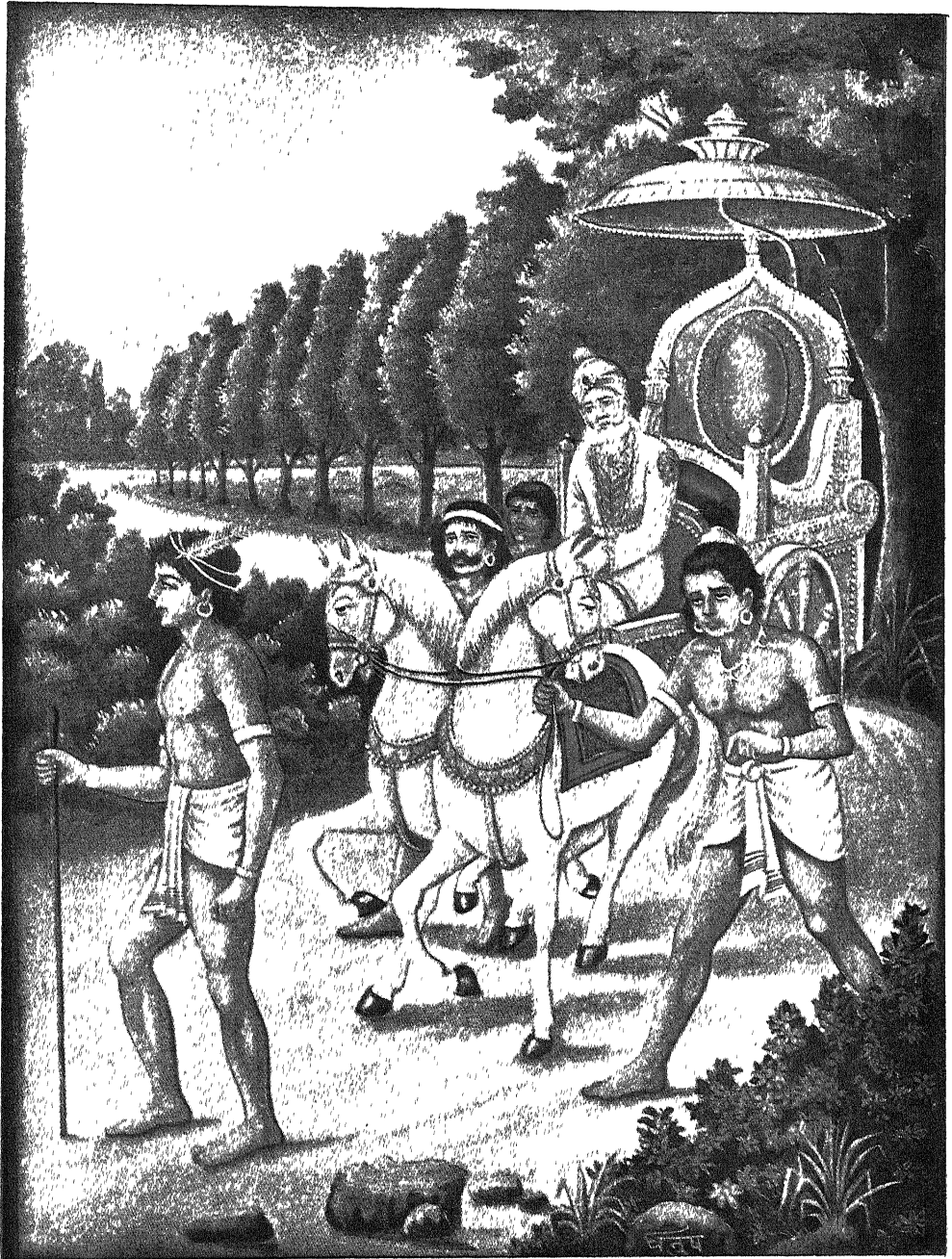
वातायनगतानां च स्त्रीणामन्वन्तरापणम् । राममेवाभितप्तानां शुश्राव परिदेवनाम् ॥ १५ ॥
स राजमार्गमध्येन सुमन्त्रः पिहिताननः । यत्र राजा दशरथस्तदेवोपययौ गृहम् ॥ १६ ॥
सोऽवतीर्य रथाच्छीघ्रं राजवेश्म प्रविश्य च । कक्ष्याः सप्ताभिचक्राम महाजनसमाकुलाः ॥ १७ ॥
हर्म्यैर्विमानैः प्रासादैरवेक्ष्याथ समागतम् । हाहाकारकृता नार्यो रामादर्शनकर्शिताः ॥ १८ ॥
आयतैर्विमलैर्नेत्रैरश्रुवेगपरिप्लुतैः । अन्योन्यमभिवीक्षन्तेऽव्यक्तमार्ततराः स्त्रियः ॥ १९ ॥
ततो दशरथस्त्रीणां प्रासादेभ्यस्ततस्ततः । रामशोकाभितप्तानां मन्दं शुश्राव जल्पितम् ॥ २० ॥

सह रामेण नियातो विना राममिहागतः । सूतः किं नाम कौसल्यां क्रोशन्तीं प्रतिवक्ष्यति ॥ २१ ॥
यथा च मन्ये दुर्जीवमेवं न सुकरं ध्रुवम् । आच्छिद्य पुत्रे निर्याते कौसल्या यत्र जीवति ॥ २२ ॥

Driving through the bazaars, Sumantra heard the wailing of women standing at the windows (of their houses) and feeling distressed on account of Śrī Rāma's exile. (15) His face covered (with cloth), the said Sumantra headed through the middle of the king's highway towards the palace where King Daśaratha was. (16) Quickly alighting from the chariot and entering the royal palace, he crossed the seven portals thronged with large crowds of men. (17) Finding from their mansions, seven-storied buildings and palaces that Sumantra had duly returned (from the forest without Śrī Rāma), ladies, who had been emaciated because of their not being able to see Śrī Rāma (all these days), burst into a loud wail. (18) Deeply distressed, the ladies gazed on one another vacantly with their big eyes flooded with an upsurge of tears and (therefore) rid of their collyrium. (19) Then he heard the talk in low tones of the consorts of Emperor Daśaratha,—who were stricken with grief caused by separation from Śrī Rāma,—from their palaces here and there. (20) (They said to one another):—"What reply will the charioteer (Sumantra), who departed (from Ayodhya) with Rāma and has returned to the capital without Rāma, give to the screaming Kausalyā (when questioned by her) ? (21) Since Kausalyā continues to survive even though her son (Rāma) has left (Ayodhya) relinquishing the throne, I (am led to) believe that surely it is not so easy to end one's life as it is hard to preserve life (against odds)." (22)

सत्यरूपं तु तद् वाक्यं राजस्त्रीणां निशामयन् । प्रदीप्त इव शोकेन विवेश सहसा गृहम् ॥ २३ ॥
स प्रविश्याष्टमीं कक्ष्यां राजानं दीनमातुरम् । पुत्रशोकपरिद्यूनमपश्यत् पाण्डुरे गृहे ॥ २४ ॥
अभिगम्य तमासीनं राजानमभिवाद्य च । सुमन्त्रो रामवचनं यथोक्तं प्रत्यवेदयत् ॥ २५ ॥
स तूष्णीमेव तच्छ्रुत्वा राजा विद्रुतमानसः । मूर्च्छितो न्यपतद् भूमौ रामशोकाभिपीडितः ॥ २६ ॥
ततोऽन्तःपुरमाविद्धं मूर्च्छिते पृथिवीपतौ । उच्छ्रित्य बाहू चुक्रोश नृपतौ पतिते क्षितौ ॥ २७ ॥
सुमित्रया तु सहिता कौसल्या पतितं पतिम् । उत्थापयामास तदा वचनं चेदमब्रवीत् ॥ २८ ॥

Hearing the aforesaid truthful assertion of the king's consorts, Sumantra for his part entered the palace all at once as though he were set ablaze with grief. (23) Entering the eighth gateway, he beheld in the white chamber the afflicted and over-anxious monarch withered through grief for his son. (24) Approaching the aforesaid king, who was seated, and greeting him, Sumantra delivered (to him) the message of Śrī Rāma as instructed (by the latter). (25) Hearing that message in perfect silence, the aforesaid monarch felt perplexed in mind and dropped unconscious to the ground, tormented as he was with grief caused by separation from Śrī Rāma. (26) The emperor having fainted, the (entire) gynaeceum now felt sore distressed. (And) when the king fell to the ground, the inmates of the gynaeceum burst into a wail raising their arms. (27) Assisted by Sumitrā, Kausalyā for her part lifted up her fallen husband on that occasion and submitted as follows:—(28)

इमं तस्य महाभाग दूतं दुष्करकारिणः । वनवासादनुप्राप्तं कस्मान्न प्रतिभाषसे ॥ २९ ॥
अद्येममनयं कृत्वा व्यपत्रपसि राघव । उत्तिष्ठ सुकृतं तेऽस्तु शोके न स्यात् सहायता ॥ ३० ॥
देव यस्या भयाद् रामं नानुपृच्छसि सारथिम् । नेह तिष्ठति कैकेयी विश्रब्धं प्रतिभाष्यताम् ॥ ३१ ॥

Sumantra returning to Ayodhya

सा तथोक्त्वा महाराजं कौसल्या शोकलालसा । धरण्यां निपपाताशु बाष्पविप्लुतभाषिणी ॥ ३२ ॥
विलपन्तीं तथा दृष्ट्वा कौसल्यां पतितां भुवि । पतिं चावेक्ष्य ताः सर्वाः समन्ताद् रुरुदुः स्त्रियः ॥ ३३ ॥
ततस्तमन्तःपुरनादमुत्थितं समीक्ष्य वृद्धास्तरुणाश्च मानवाः ।
स्त्रियश्च सर्वा रुरुदुः समन्ततः पुरं तदासीत् पुनरेव संकुलम् ॥ ३४ ॥
इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे सप्तपञ्चाशः सर्गः ॥ ५७ ॥

"Wherefore, O highly blessed king, do you not make answer to the messenger of Rāma,—who has accomplished a difficult task,—returned from his (recent) trip to the forest ? (29) Having perpetrated this unseemly act (in the shape of banishing your eldest and worthiest son), do you feel abashed today, O scion of Raghu ? (Kindly) get up ! Let your virtue (resulting from your devotion to truth) abide. In the event of your giving way to grief, your associates (too) may cease to be. (30) Kaikeyī, for fear of whom you do not address inquiries concerning Rāma to the charioteer (Sumantra), O lord, is not present here. (Therefore) reply may be given (to Sumantra) with confidence." (31) Having submitted to the emperor as aforesaid, the celebrated Kausalyā, who was wholly given up to grief, and was faltering through tears, forthwith dropped to the ground. (32) Seeing Kausalyā fallen to the ground wailing as aforesaid, and gazing on their husband (lying senseless), all those ladies around her wept. (33) Perceiving that (plaintive) cry raised in the gynaeceum, men, (both) aged and young, and all women flocked around weeping and the city of Ayodhya was agitated once more. (34)

Thus ends Canto Fifty-seven in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

अष्टपञ्चाशः सर्गः

Canto LVIII

Bewailing the lot of Śrī Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa, who did not in any way deserve the hardships they were undergoing in the forest, the emperor urges Sumantra to deliver their parting message and the charioteer proceeds to tell him what they said.

प्रत्याश्वस्तो यदा राजा मोहात् प्रत्यागतस्मृतिः । तदाऽऽजुहाव तं सूतं रामवृत्तान्तकारणात् ॥ १ ॥
तदा सूतो महाराजं कृताञ्जलिरुपस्थितः । राममेवानुशोचन्तं दुःखशोकसमन्वितम् ॥ २ ॥
वृद्धं परमसंतप्तं नवग्रहमिव द्विपम् । विनिःश्वसन्तं ध्यायन्तमस्वस्थमिव कुञ्जरम् ॥ ३ ॥
राजा तु रजसा सूतं ध्वस्ताङ्गं समुपस्थितम् । अश्रुपूर्णमुखं दीनमुवाच परमार्तवत् ॥ ४ ॥

When the king woke from his swoon, consciousness having returned (to him) he confidently summoned (to his presence) the charioteer (Sumantra) in order to hear the news about Śrī Rāma. (1) With joined palms the charioteer then sought the presence of the aged emperor, who was dolefully sighing, seized as he was with agony and grief and, feeling sore distressed and ill at ease, was

mourning for Śrī Rāma alone and (thus) resembled a newly-captured elephant hissing and remembering the leader of its herd. (2-3) Like one sore afflicted, the king for his part said to the charioteer, who stood respectfully, wearing a wretched look, his limbs stained with dust and his face bathed in tears:—(4)

क्व नु वत्स्यति धर्मात्मा वृक्षमूलमुपाश्रितः । सोऽत्यन्तसुखितः सूत किमशिष्यति राघवः ॥ ५ ॥
दुःखस्यानुचितो दुःखं सुमन्त्र शयनोचितः । भूमिपालात्मजो भूमौ शेते कथमनाथवत् ॥ ६ ॥
यं यान्तमनुयान्ति स्म पदातिरथकुञ्जराः । स वत्स्यति कथं रामो विजनं वनमाश्रितः ॥ ७ ॥
व्यालैर्मृगैराचरितं कृष्णसर्पनिषेवितम् । कथं कुमारौ वैदेह्या सार्धं वनमुपाश्रितौ ॥ ८ ॥
सुकुमार्या तपस्विन्या सुमन्त्र सह सीतया । राजपुत्रौ कथं पादैरवरुह्य रथाद् गतौ ॥ ९ ॥
सिद्धार्थः खलु सूत त्वं येन दृष्टौ ममात्मजौ । वनान्तं प्रविशन्तौ तावश्विनाविव मन्दरम् ॥ १० ॥
किमुवाच वचो रामः किमुवाच च लक्ष्मणः । सुमन्त्र वनमासाद्य किमुवाच च मैथिली ॥ ११ ॥
आसितं शयितं भुक्तं सूत रामस्य कीर्तय । जीविष्याम्ययमेतेन ययातिरिव साधुषु ॥ १२ ॥

"Where will Rāma (a scion of Raghu), whose mind is given to piety, live taking shelter under a tree ? What, O charioteer, will he eat, having lived most comfortably (all these years) ? (5) How, O Sumantra, does the prince, who is undeserving of suffering and is worthy of reposing on a (costly) bed, lie down miserably on the ground like one forlorn ? (6) How will Rāma, whom foot-soldiers, chariots and elephants used to follow whenever he went out (of his palace), live confined to a lonely forest ? (7) How have the two princes taken up their abode with Sītā (a princess of the Videha clan) in a forest frequented by carnivorous animals and deer and infested with cobras ? (8) How did the two princes (Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa) with Sītā of delicate frame and engaged in austerities proceed on foot, getting down from the chariot, O Sumantra ? (9) Accomplished of purpose indeed are you, O charioteer, by whom my aforesaid two sons (Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa) have been seen entering deep into the forest region as the Aświns (the twin-born physicians of gods) enter the precincts of Mount Mandara (a mountain frequented by gods). (10) Having reached the forest, O Sumantra, what words did Rāma utter and what did Lakṣmaṇa say ? And what did Sītā (daughter of the king of Mithilā) say ? (11) (Pray) speak (to me) about (the mode of) Rāma's sitting, lying down to sleep and eating, O charioteer ! I shall survive on the strength of this information (even) as King Yayāti (when hurled down from heaven on his stock of merits having been exhausted through self-praise) lived (happily) in the midst of pious souls.*" (12)

इति सूतो नरेन्द्रेण चोदितः सज्जमानया । उवाच वाचा राजानं स बाष्पपरिबद्धया ॥ १३ ॥
अब्रवीन्मे महाराज धर्ममेवानुपालयन् । अञ्जलिं राघवः कृत्वा शिरसाभिप्रणम्य च ॥ १४ ॥
सूत मद्वचनात् तस्य तातस्य विदितात्मनः । शिरसा वन्दनीयस्य वन्द्यौ पादौ महात्मनः ॥ १५ ॥
सर्वमन्तःपुरं वाच्यं सूत मद्वचनात् त्वया । आरोग्यमविशेषेण यथार्हमभिवादनम् ॥ १६ ॥

* We read in the Mahābhārata, Ādiparva, how when doomed to fall from heaven, King Yayāti requested Indra to cast his lot with saints. He was accordingly sent down to a spot on the earth, where four ascetics—Aṣṭaka, Pratardana, Vasumān and King Śibi had been practising austerities, and had a discourse with them (Discourses LXXXVIII to XCIII).

माता च मम कौसल्या कुशलं चाभिवादनम् । अप्रमादं च वक्तव्या ब्रूयाश्चैनामिदं वचः ॥ १७ ॥
धर्मनित्या यथाकालमग्न्यगारपरा भव । देवि देवस्य पादौ च देववत् परिपालय ॥ १८ ॥
अभिमानं च मानं च त्यक्त्वा वर्तस्व मातृषु । अनुराजानमार्यां च कैकेयीमम्ब कारय ॥ १९ ॥
कुमारे भरते वृत्तिर्वर्तितव्या च राजवत् । अप्यज्येष्ठा हि राजानो राजधर्ममनुस्मर ॥ २० ॥

Urged thus by the emperor, the said charioteer replied to the king in a faltering voice choked with tears (as follows):—(13) "Joining his palms and offering respectful greetings with bent head and (thus) strictly following the prescribed course of conduct, O great king, Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) said to me, 'The feet of that high-souled father (of mine), who has realized the Self and deserves to be greeted with bent head, should be saluted in my name, O charioteer! (14-15) The whole gynaeceum, O charioteer, should be asked without distinction on my behalf of their welfare by you and should be offered greetings in order of their rank (seniority). (16) And my mother, Kausalyā, should be told of my welfare and offered greetings (on my behalf) and assured of my punctiliousness (with regard to my sacred obligations). Again the following message should be delivered to her:—(17) 'Remain constantly devoted to righteousness and attend the fire-sanctuary at the proper time (the time of fire-worship). And tend, O godly lady, the feet of your spouse as those of a deity. (18) Shaking off pride (of descent) and self-esteem (born of seniority), treat my (other) mothers on an equal footing. And, O mother, treat Kaikeyī, to whom the king is (so) devoted, as superior (to you). (19) Treatment should be accorded to Prince Bharata as to His Majesty. Even though junior (in age) kings deserve to be honoured. (Pray) bear in mind your duty towards a king. (20)

भरतः कुशलं वाच्यो वाच्यो मद्वचनेन च । सर्वास्वेव यथान्यायं वृत्तिं वर्तस्व मातृषु ॥ २१ ॥
वक्तव्यश्च महाबाहुरिक्ष्वाकुकुलनन्दनः । पितरं यौवराज्यस्थो राज्यस्थमनुपालय ॥ २२ ॥
अतिक्रान्तवया राजा मा स्मैनं व्यपरोरुधः । कुमारराज्ये जीवस्व तस्यैवाज्ञाप्रवर्तनात् ॥ २३ ॥
अब्रवीच्चापि मां भूयो भृशमश्रूणि वर्तयन् । मातेव मम माता ते द्रष्टव्या पुत्रगर्धिनी ॥ २४ ॥
इत्येवं मां महाबाहुर्ब्रुवन्नेव महायशाः । रामो राजीवपत्राक्षो भृशमश्रूण्यवर्तयत् ॥ २५ ॥

"Bharata (too) should be told of my welfare and admonished (in the following words) on my behalf:—(Pray) behave justly towards all your mothers. (21) The mighty-armed Bharata (the delight of Ikṣwāku's race) should be further exhorted (as follows):—(Even) when installed in the office of Prince Regent (please) serve your father, who (still) occupies the throne (of Ayodhya). (22) The king has gone beyond the age of rulership: do not dethrone him (on this score). (Therefore) by keeping up his authority alone maintain yourself by the office of Prince Regent.' (23) Nay, shedding tears again and again, Śrī Rāma further asked me to tell Bharata:—'My mother (Kausalyā), who is excessively fond of myself (her son), should be looked upon as your (own) mother.' (24) Even while instructing me as aforesaid, the mighty-armed and highly illustrious Śrī Rāma, who has eyes resembling the petals of a lotus, shed tears again and again. (25)

लक्ष्मणस्तु सुसंक्रुद्धो निःश्वसन् वाक्यमब्रवीत् । केनायमपराधेन राजपुत्रो विवासितः ॥ २६ ॥
राजा तु खलु कैकेय्या लघु चाश्रुत्य शासनम् । कृतं कार्यमकार्यं वा वयं येनाभिपीडिताः ॥ २७ ॥

यदि प्रव्राजितो रामो लोभकारणकारितम् । वरदाननिमित्तं वा सर्वथा दुष्कृतं कृतम् ॥ २८ ॥
इदं तावद् यथाकाममीश्वरस्य कृते कृतम् । रामस्य तु परित्यागे न हेतुमुपलक्षये ॥ २९ ॥
असमीक्ष्य समारब्धं विरुद्धं बुद्धिलाघवात् । जनयिष्यति संक्रोशं राघवस्य विवासनम् ॥ ३० ॥
अहं तावन्महाराजे पितृत्वं नोपलक्षये । भ्राता भर्ता च बन्धुश्च पिता च मम राघवः ॥ ३१ ॥
सर्वलोकप्रियं त्यक्त्वा सर्वलोकहिते रतं । सर्वलोकोऽनुरज्येत कथं चानेन कर्मणा ॥ ३२ ॥
सर्वप्रजाभिरामं हि रामं प्रव्राज्य धार्मिकम् । सर्वलोकविरोधेन कथं राजा भविष्यति ॥ ३३ ॥

"Highly enraged, Lakṣmaṇa for his part spoke hissing as follows.—'For what offence has this prince (Śrī Rāma) been exiled ? (26) Having quickly promised to carry out the command of Kaikeyī, the king executed it, not minding whether it was worth doing or not, as a result of which we have been subjected to excessive suffering. (27) If the event of Śrī Rāma having been exiled was brought about through greed (for power) or because a boon had been granted to that effect (by the emperor), a wholly undesirable act has been done. (28) Whether this was done according to the king's pleasure or through the will of Providence, I do not find any justification whatsoever for Śrī Rāma's exile. (29) The exile of Śrī Rāma, which has been brought about contrary to usage without proper consideration due to shortsight, will lead to remorse. (30) I at any rate perceive no parenthood in the emperor. Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) is my (elder) brother, master, kinsman and father too. (31) How can the entire populace be pleased through this act with the king, who is devoted to the good of all people having forsaken Śrī Rāma (the beloved of all people) ? (32) Having actually exiled the pious Śrī Rāma, the delighter of all the people, in opposition to the will of all people, how can father continue to be the king ?' (33)

जानकी तु महाराज निःश्वसन्ती तपस्विनी । भूतोपहतचित्तेव विष्ठिता विस्मृता स्थिता ॥ ३४ ॥
अदृष्टपूर्वव्यसना राजपुत्री यशस्विनी । तेन दुःखेन रुदती नैव मां किंचिदब्रवीत् ॥ ३५ ॥
उद्वीक्षमाणा भर्तारं मुखेन परिशुष्यता । मुमोच सहसा बाष्पं प्रयान्तमुपवीक्ष्य सा ॥ ३६ ॥
तथैव रामोऽश्रुमुखः कृताञ्जलिः स्थितोऽब्रवील्लक्ष्मणबाहुपालितः ।
तथैव सीता रुदती तपस्विनी निरीक्षते राजरथं तथैव माम् ॥ ३७ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डेऽष्टपञ्चाशः सर्गः ॥ ५८ ॥

"Sītā (daughter of Janaka), for her part, who is engaged in austerities, stood sighing and motionless, oblivious of everything as though her mind was possessed by a spirit, O emperor ! (34) Having never seen adversity before, the illustrious princess did not speak anything at all to me, weeping as she did due to the distress of her husband. (35) Seeing me about to depart (for Ayodhya), she suddenly broke into tears as she stood looking at her husband with a withering face. (36) Precisely as aforesaid spoke Śrī Rāma, protected by the arms of Lakṣmaṇa, and standing with joined palms, his face covered with tears. And so did Sītā, engaged in austerities, gaze weeping on the royal chariot (driven by me) as well as on me." (37)

Thus ends Canto Fifty-eight in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

एकोनषष्टितमः सर्गः

Canto LIX

To satisfy the emperor's curiosity Sumantra tells him further of Śrī Rāma's departure for the forest, and also apprises him of the pitiable condition of the animate as well as of the inanimate creation in his realm as also of his capital consequent on Śrī Rāma's exile. Hearing of the woeful tale, Daśaratha raves like a madman in many ways in the presence of the charioteer-minister.

मम त्वश्वा निवृत्तस्य न प्रावर्तन्त वर्त्मनि । उष्णमश्रु विमुञ्चन्तो रामे सम्प्रस्थिते वनम् ॥ १ ॥
उभाभ्यां राजपुत्राभ्यामथ कृत्वाहमञ्जलिम् । प्रस्थितो रथमास्थाय तद् दुःखमपि धारयन् ॥ २ ॥
गुहेन सार्धं तत्रैव स्थितोऽस्मि दिवसान् बहून् । आशया यदि मां रामः पुनः शब्दापयेदिति ॥ ३ ॥
विषये ते महाराज महाव्यसनकर्शिताः । अपि वृक्षाः परिम्लानाः सपुष्पाङ्कुरकोरकाः ॥ ४ ॥
उपतप्तोदका नद्यः पल्वलानि सरांसि च । परिशुष्कपलाशानि वनान्युपवनानि च ॥ ५ ॥
न च सर्पन्ति सत्त्वानि व्याला न प्रचरन्ति च । रामशोकाभिभूतं तन्निष्कूजमिव तद् वनम् ॥ ६ ॥
लीनपुष्करपत्राश्च नद्यश्च कलुषोदकाः । संतप्तपद्माः पद्मिन्यो लीनमीनविहंगमाः ॥ ७ ॥
जलजानि च पुष्पाणि माल्यानि स्थलजानि च । नातिभान्त्यल्पगन्धीनि फलानि च यथापुरम् ॥ ८ ॥
अत्रोद्यानानि शून्यानि प्रलीनविहगानि च । न चाभिरामानारामान् पश्यामि मनुजर्षभ ॥ ९ ॥

"Offering salutation with joined palms to both the princes on Śrī Rāma having duly departed for the forest, and mounting the chariot, I too forthwith made ready to depart (for Ayodhya), restraining that (unbearable) agony (of separation from Śrī Rāma). My horses, however, (even) as I turned my back (on Śrī Rāma) did not proceed on their journey (to Ayodhya) and stood shedding tears of grief. (1-2) I remained with Guha (the chieftain of Sringaverpur) at his own place for many (three) days in the hope that Śrī Rāma might probably call me again (through foresters). (3) Withered through intense suffering, O great monarch, even trees in your kingdom with their flowers, shoots and buds have been blasted. (4) The water of the rivers as well as of ponds and lakes has got dried up. (Nay) the leaves in the wood and groves have got withered. (5) Living beings (in the forest) do not move about nor do reptiles crawl (even in search of food), the (entire) living creation being overwhelmed with grief born of separation from Śrī Rāma. (Nay) the forest on the way is noiseless (too) as it were (though full of birds). (6) The water of the rivers, again, has become turbid and the leaves of the lotuses in them have fallen down. The lotuses in the ponds have got dried up and the fishes and water-fowls in them have perished. (7) Nay, giving forth very little fragrance, aquatic flowers and those growing on land do not look very charming and fruits (too) are not so luscious as before. (8) Desolate are the gardens in the city and the birds in them have disappeared. Nor do I find the parks (so) pleasing, O jewel among men ! (9)

प्रविशन्तमयोध्यायां न कश्चिदभिनन्दति । नरा राममपश्यन्तो निःश्वसन्ति मुहुर्मुहुः ॥ १० ॥
देव राजरथं दृष्ट्वा विना राममिहागतम् । दूरादश्रुमुखः सर्वो राजमार्गे गतो जनः ॥ ११ ॥
हर्म्यैर्विमानैः प्रासादैरवेक्ष्य रथमागतम् । हाहाकारकृता नार्यो रामादर्शनकर्शिताः ॥ १२ ॥
आयतैर्विमलैर्नेत्रैरश्रुवेगपरिप्लुतैः । अन्योन्यमभिवीक्षन्तेऽव्यक्तमार्ततराः स्त्रियः ॥ १३ ॥
नामित्राणां न मित्राणामुदासीनजनस्य च । अहमार्ततया कंचिद् विशेषं नोपलक्षये ॥ १४ ॥
अप्रहृष्टमनुष्या च दीननागतुरंगमा । आर्तस्वरपरिम्लाना विनिःश्वसितनिःस्वना ॥ १५ ॥
निरानन्दा महाराज रामप्रव्राजनातुरा । कौसल्या पुत्रहीनेव अयोध्या प्रतिभाति मे ॥ १६ ॥

"None greeted me as I entered Ayodhya. Not perceiving Śrī Rāma, men sighed again and again. (10) Seeing from a distance the royal chariot arrived in Ayodhya without Śrī Rāma, O lord, all the people present on the main road had their faces covered with tears. (11) Perceiving from their mansions, seven-storeyed buildings and palaces the chariot returned (from the forest), the ladies, who were feeling distressed due to their not being able to see Śrī Rāma, broke into lamentation. (12) The ladies, who were sore afflicted (due to the exile of Śrī Rāma) mutely gazed on one another with their large eyes flooded with an upsurge of tears, their collyrium washed (thereby). (13) I do not perceive any difference in point of affliction between his enemies, friends and neutrals. (14) With its cheerless men and women and wretched elephants and horses, (nay) looking blasted through plaintive cries and full of noise in the shape of sighs, O great monarch, Ayodhya appears to me joyless and distressed through the banishment of Śrī Rāma, like Empress Kausalyā, bereft of her son." (15-16)

सूतस्य वचनं श्रुत्वा वाचा परमदीनया । बाष्पोपहतया सूतमिदं वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ १७ ॥
कैकेय्या विनियुक्तेन पापाभिजनभावया । मया न मन्त्रकुशलैर्वृद्धैः सह समर्थितम् ॥ १८ ॥
न सुहृद्भिर्न चामात्यैर्मन्त्रयित्वा सनैगमैः । मयायमर्थः सम्मोहात् स्त्रीहेतोः सहसा कृतः ॥ १९ ॥
भवितव्यतया नूनमिदं वा व्यसनं महत् । कुलस्यास्य विनाशाय प्राप्तं सूत यदृच्छया ॥ २० ॥
सूत यद्यस्ति ते किंचिन्मयापि सुकृतं कृतम् । त्वं प्रापयाशु मां रामं प्राणाः संत्वरयन्ति माम् ॥ २१ ॥
यद्यद्यापि ममैवाज्ञा निवर्तयतु राघवम् । न शक्ष्यामि विना रामं मुहूर्तमपि जीवितुम् ॥ २२ ॥
अथवापि महाबाहुर्गतो दूरं भविष्यति । मामेव रथमारोप्य शीघ्रं रामाय दर्शय ॥ २३ ॥
वृत्तदंष्ट्रो महेष्वासः क्वासौ लक्ष्मणपूर्वजः । यदि जीवामि साध्वेनं पश्येयं सीतया सह ॥ २४ ॥
लोहिताक्षं महाबाहुमामुक्तमणिकुण्डलम् । रामं यदि न पश्येयं गमिष्यामि यमक्षयम् ॥ २५ ॥
अतो नु किं दुःखतरं योऽहमिक्ष्वाकुनन्दनम् । इमामवस्थामापन्नो नेह पश्यामि राघवम् ॥ २६ ॥
हा राम रामानुज हा हा वैदेहि तपस्विनि । न मां जानीत दुःखेन म्रियमाणमनाथवत् ॥ २७ ॥

Hearing the submission of Sumantra, Daśaratha made the following reply to the charioteer in a most piteous tone, faltering through tears—(17) "No deliberation was made by me (on the point of sending Rāma into exile) with the elders clever in giving counsel, dictated as I was by Kaikeyī of sinful birth and intention. (18) Without taking counsel with my well-wishers and ministers including those well-versed in the Vedas, was this step precipitately taken by me through excessive infatuation in order to please my wife. (19) Or this great calamity has surely taken us by surprise by the will of Providence for the destruction of this race, O charioteer ! (20) If at all, O charioteer, any good turn has been done to you by me, take you me at once

to Rāma; (for) my senses are importunately hastening me (to catch a last glimpse of Rāma). (21) If my authority alone prevails even today, let anyone fetch Rāma back (to Ayodhya); (for) I shall not be able to survive without Rāma even for an hour or so. (22) Or maybe the mighty-armed prince might have gone afar (by now). (In that case) helping me on to a chariot, promptly show me to Rāma. (23) Where is that Rāma (the eldest brother of Lakṣmaṇa) who has pearl-like teeth and is possessed of a mighty bow ? I can survive only if I am properly able to see him with Sītā. (24) If I am not able to see the mighty-armed Rāma with reddish eyes and adorned with ear-rings made of gems, I shall (surely) reach the abode of Yama (the god of death). (25) What can possibly be more painful to me than the fact that I do not behold Rāma (a scion of Raghu), the delight of the Ikṣwākus, at this juncture, when I am reduced to this (wretched) plight ? (26) Ah Rāma, ah Lakṣmaṇa (younger brother of Rāma), ah Sītā (a princess of the Videha clan), who are engaged in austerities, you do not know that I am dying through agony like a forlorn creature." (27)

स तेन राजा दुःखेन भृशमर्पितचेतनः । अवगाढः सुदुष्पारं शोकसागरमब्रवीत् ॥ २८ ॥
रामशोकमहावेगः सीताविरहपारगः । श्वसितोर्मिमहावर्तो बाष्पवेगजलाविलः ॥ २९ ॥
बाहुविक्षेपमीनोऽसौ विक्रन्दितमहास्वनः । प्रकीर्णकेशशैवालः कैकेयीवडवामुखः ॥ ३० ॥
ममाश्रुवेगप्रभवः कुब्जावाक्यमहाग्रहः । वरवेलो नृशंसाया रामप्रव्राजनायतः ॥ ३१ ॥
यस्मिन् बत निमग्नोऽहं कौसल्ये राघवं विना । दुस्तरो जीवता देवि मयायं शोकसागरः ॥ ३२ ॥
अशोभनं योऽहमिहाद्य राघवं दिदृक्षमाणो न लभे सलक्ष्मणम् ।
इतीव राजा विलपन् महायशाः पपात तूर्णं शयने स मूर्च्छितः ॥ ३३ ॥
इति विलपति पार्थिवे प्रनष्टे करुणतरं द्विगुणं च रामहेतोः ।
वचनमनुनिशम्य तस्य देवी भयमगमत् पुनरेव राममाता ॥ ३४ ॥
इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे एकोनषष्टितमः सर्गः ॥ ५९ ॥

His mind being overwhelmed with that (unbearable) agony, and plunged as he was in that ocean of grief, which was most difficult to cross, the aforesaid king spoke of his grief in terms of an ocean (in the following words):—(28) "This ocean of grief, in which alas ! I am plunged, O Kausalyā, bereft as I am of Rāma, is difficult for me to cross while I am living, O godly lady ! (Consciousness of) Rāma's grief (caused by his separation from his parents, relations and friends etc.) is its tremendous force. Severance from Sītā is the other shore to which it extends. Outgoing and ingoing breaths are the waves and whirlpools. It is rendered turbid by (the water of rivers flowing into it in the shape of) the upsurge of tears (of Kausalyā and others). The throwing about of arms (in agony) represents the (leaping of) fishes. The loud wailings represent its roaring. Dishevelled hair are the sea-weeds. Kaikeyī represents the submarine fire. It is the source of (showers in the form of) the welling up of my tears. The words of Mantharā are (so many) mighty alligators infesting its waters. The couple of boons (granted by me in favour of Kaikeyī) represent its coastline and (the term of) Rāma's exile marks its extent. (29—32) It is (most) unfortunate that I am unable to clasp on Rāma (a scion of Raghu) along with Lakṣmaṇa on this spot today, even though I long to see them." Lamenting thus, that highly illustrious monarch immediately dropped senseless as it were on the couch. (33) When the emperor fainted while

lamenting most piteously for Rāma as aforesaid, Queen Kausalyā (Śrī Rāma's mother) once more fell a prey to twofold fear on hearing his wail. (34)

Thus ends Canto Fifty-nine in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

षष्टितमः सर्गः

Canto LX

Sumantra does not succeed in soothing the agony of Kausalyā, who tossed about on the floor due to excess of grief over her separation from Śrī Rāma, even though he consoles her by telling her that Śrī Rāma, being resolute and high-minded, was living in the forest free from agony.

ततो भूतोपसृष्टेव वेपमाना पुनः पुनः । धरण्यां गतसत्त्वेव कौसल्या सूतमब्रवीत् ॥ १ ॥
नय मां यत्र काकुत्स्थः सीता यत्र च लक्ष्मणः । तान् विना क्षणमप्यद्य जीवितुं नोत्सहे ह्यहम् ॥ २ ॥
निवर्तय रथं शीघ्रं दण्डकान् नय मामपि । अथ तान् नानुगच्छामि गमिष्यामि यमक्षयम् ॥ ३ ॥
बाष्पवेगोपहतया स वाचा सज्जमानया । इदमाश्वासयन् देवीं सूतः प्राञ्जलिरब्रवीत् ॥ ४ ॥
त्यज शोकं च मोहं च सम्भ्रमं दुःखजं तथा । व्यवधूय च संतापं वने वत्स्यति राघवः ॥ ५ ॥
लक्ष्मणश्चापि रामस्य पादौ परिचरन् वने । आराधयति धर्मज्ञः परलोकं जितेन्द्रियः ॥ ६ ॥

Trembling again and again as though possessed by a spirit, and lying on the floor as though life had departed from her, Kausalyā thereupon spoke to Sumantra (as follows):—(1) "Take me to the place where Rāma (a scion of Kakutstha), Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa happen to be; for without them I cannot bear to live even for a moment longer today. (2) Quickly take the chariot back and convey me too to the Daṇḍaka forest. In case I do not follow them, I will proceed to the abode of Death." (3) Seeking to comfort the queen, the aforesaid charioteer submitted (to her) with joined palms as follows in a faltering voice choked with an upsurge of tears:—(4) "Abandon grief and infatuation as well as agitation born of sorrow; for, shaking off agony, Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) will take up his abode in the forest. (5) Serving the feet of Śrī Rāma in the forest, Lakṣmaṇa too, who knows what is right and has subdued his senses, is straightening his path to the other world (thereby). (6)

विजनेऽपि वने सीता वासं प्राप्य गृहेष्विव । विश्रम्भं लभतेऽभीता रामे विन्यस्तमानसा ॥ ७ ॥
नास्या दैन्यं कृतं किंचित् सुसूक्ष्ममपि लक्ष्यते । उचितेव प्रवासानां वैदेही प्रतिभाति मे ॥ ८ ॥
नगरोपवनं गत्वा यथा स्म रमते पुरा । तथैव रमते सीता निर्जनेषु वनेष्वपि ॥ ९ ॥
बालेव रमते सीता बालचन्द्रनिभानना । रामा रामे ह्यदीनात्मा विजनेऽपि वने सती ॥ १० ॥
तद्गतं हृदयं यस्यास्तदधीनं च जीवितम् । अयोध्या हि भवेदस्या रामहीना तथा वनम् ॥ ११ ॥
परिपृच्छति वैदेही ग्रामांश्च नगराणि च । गतिं दृष्ट्वा नदीनां च पादपान् विविधानपि ॥ १२ ॥
रामं वा लक्ष्मणं वापि दृष्ट्वा जानाति जानकी । अयोध्या क्रोशमात्रे तु विहारमिव सा श्रिता ॥ १३ ॥
इदमेव स्मराम्यस्याः सहसैवोपजल्पितम् । कैकेयीसंश्रितं जल्पं नेदानीं प्रतिभाति माम् ॥ १४ ॥

"Getting her abode even in a lonely forest, Sītā, whose mind stands focussed on Śrī Rāma, remains undaunted and enjoys complacence (even) as in her (own) house. (7) Not the faintest dejection of any kind caused by her exile is traceable in her. The daughter of Janaka (the ruler of the Videha kingdom) appears to me as though accustomed to staying away from home (now and then). (8) Sītā finds as much delight in lonely forests as she used to do in the past whenever she visited the groves in the precincts of the city. (9) The charming and virtuous Sītā, whose countenance shone like the full moon and who was (ever) undepressed in spirits, surely found delight as a girl even in the lonely forest in the presence of Śrī Rāma. (10) Devoid of Śrī Rāma (however) Ayodhya too would be no better than a forest to Sītā, whose heart is intent on him and whose life is dependent on him. (11) Seeing villages and cities too as well as the flow of rivers as also trees of every description, Sītā (a princess of the Videha clan) makes inquiries (concerning them of Rāma or Lakṣmaṇa, whoever is by her side). (12) Finding Śrī Rāma or Lakṣmaṇa (beside her), the daughter of Janaka feels that she is as it were on a visit to a pleasure-garden only a couple of miles away from Ayodhya. (13) I remember only this much pertaining to Sītā. The remark uttered by her only in an unguarded moment concerning Kaikeyī does not strike me (just) at present." (14)

ध्वंसयित्वा तु तद् वाक्यं प्रमादात् पर्युपस्थितम् । ह्लादनं वचनं सूतो देव्या मधुरमब्रवीत् ॥ १५ ॥
अध्वना वातवेगेन सम्भ्रमेणातपेन च । न विगच्छति वैदेह्याश्चन्द्रांशुसदृशी प्रभा ॥ १६ ॥
सदृशं शतपत्रस्य पूर्णचन्द्रोपमप्रभम् । वदनं तद् वदान्याया वैदेह्या न विकम्पते ॥ १७ ॥
अलक्तरसरक्ताभावलक्तरसवर्जितौ । अद्यापि चरणौ तस्याः पद्मकोशसमप्रभौ ॥ १८ ॥
नूपुरोत्कृष्टलीलेव खेलं गच्छति भामिनी । इदानीमपि वैदेही तद्रागान्यस्तभूषणा ॥ १९ ॥
गजं वा वीक्ष्य सिंहं वा व्याघ्रं वा वनमाश्रिता । नाहारयति संत्रासं बाहू रामस्य संश्रिता ॥ २० ॥
न शोच्यास्ते न चात्मा ते शोच्यो नापि जनाधिपः । इदं हि चरितं लोके प्रतिष्ठास्यति शाश्वतम् ॥ २१ ॥
विधूय शोकं परिहृष्टमानसा महर्षियाते पथि सुव्यवस्थिताः ।
वने रता वन्यफलाशनाः पितुः शुभां प्रतिज्ञां प्रतिपालयन्ति ते ॥ २२ ॥
तथापि सूतेन सुयुक्तवादिना निवार्यमाणा सुतशोककर्शिता ।
न चैव देवी विरराम कूजितात् प्रियेति पुत्रेति च राघवेति च ॥ २३ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे षष्टितमः सर्गः ॥ ६० ॥

Skipping over that reference that had escaped from his lips through inadvertence, the charioteer spoke the following agreeable words that brought delight to the queen:—(15) "The splendour of Sītā (a princess of the Videha clan), which resembles the moonlight, does not fade through (fatigue of the) journey, the violence of the winds, agitation (caused by the sight of fearful beasts etc.) and the heat of the sun. (16) The well-known face of princess of the Videha clan), which resembles a lotus and whose effulgence vies with that of the full moon, never fades. (17) Her soles, which, though no longer painted with Alakta (the red juice obtained from the resin of certain trees), still look red as Alakta and cast an effulgence akin to that of a lotus bud. (18) The high-minded Sītā (a princess of the Videha clan), who has not renounced her jewels out of love for Śrī Rāma (who is pleased to see her adorned), walks in a charming gait, as though

outvying the cackling of swans by (the music of) her anklets. (19) Though living in the forest, she does not give way to fear on seeing an elephant or a lion or a tiger, fully dependent as she is on the arms of Śrī Rāma. (20) Neither they nor your own self nor the king deserves to be pitied. This story (of Śrī Rāma) will abide in the world for ever. (21) Having shaken off grief, the (three) exiles, who are firmly established with a highly delighted mind on the path trodden by eminent sages and are enamoured of the forest, are fully implementing the sacred vow of their father, living on wild fruits (etc. alone)". (22) Even though being forbidden in the aforesaid manner by the charioteer, who spoke highly reasonable words, the queen (Kausalyā), who was torn with grief caused by separation from her son, did not cease in the least from crying out: "O my darling! O my son!! O scion of Raghu!!!" (23)

Thus ends Canto Sixty in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

एकषष्टितमः सर्गः

Canto LXI

Apprehending danger to the king from his inability to bear the grief caused by separation from Śrī Rāma, Kausalyā, though foremost among devoted wives, twits Daśaratha.

वनं गते धर्मरते रामे रमयतां वरे । कौसल्या रुदती चार्ता भर्तारमिदमब्रवीत् ॥ १ ॥
यद्यपि त्रिषु लोकेषु प्रथितं ते महद् यशः । सानुक्रोशो वदान्यश्च प्रियवादी च राघवः ॥ २ ॥
कथं नरवरश्रेष्ठ पुत्रौ तौ सह सीतया । दुःखितौ सुखसंवृद्धौ वने दुःखं सहिष्यतः ॥ ३ ॥
सा नूनं तरुणी श्यामा सुकुमारी सुखोचिता । कथमुष्णं च शीतं च मैथिली विसहिष्यते ॥ ४ ॥
भुक्त्वाशनं विशालाक्षी सूपदंशान्वितं शुभम् । वन्यं नैवारमाहारं कथं सीतोपभोक्ष्यते ॥ ५ ॥
गीतवादित्रनिर्घोषं श्रुत्वा शुभसमन्विता । कथं क्रव्यादसिंहानां शब्दं श्रोष्यत्यशोभनम् ॥ ६ ॥

Śrī Rāma, who was devoted to righteousness and was the foremost among those who bring delight (to the people), having departed for the forest, Kausalyā, who was feeling distressed (due to separation from her son) spoke weeping to her husband as follows:—(1) "Although your great glory is extended through (all) the three worlds, and it is well known that you (a scion of Raghu) are full of compassion and generous and speak kindly (to all), you never paused to think how your aforesaid two sons (Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa) with Sītā, who have been brought up in ease, will endure suffering in the forest when faced with hardships, O jewel among the foremost of men! (2-3) Indeed how will that young and delicate-bodied princess of Mithila, who is still about sixteen years of age and is deserving of comforts, bear heat and cold? (4) How, having partaken of a rich diet with delicious sauces and other seasoned articles, will the large-eyed Sītā live on meals consisting of wild rice? (5) How, having listened to the sweet strains of vocal and instrumental music, will Sītā (who is richly endowed with auspicious qualities) bear to hear the unpleasant roar of lions, animals that feed on flesh? (6)

महेन्द्रध्वजसंकाशः क्व नु शेते महाभुजः । भुजं परिघसंकाशमुपाधाय महाबलः ॥ ७ ॥
पद्मवर्णं सुकेशान्तं पद्मनिःश्वासमुत्तमम् । कदा द्रक्ष्यामि रामस्य वदनं पुष्करेक्षणम् ॥ ८ ॥
वज्रसारमयं नूनं हृदयं मे न संशयः । अपश्यन्त्या न तं यद् वै फलतीदं सहस्रधा ॥ ९ ॥
यत् त्वया करुणं कर्म व्यपोह्य मम बान्धवाः । निरस्ताः परिधावन्ति सुखार्हाः कृपणा वने ॥ १० ॥
यदि पञ्चदशे वर्षे राघवः पुनरेष्यति । जह्याद् राज्यं च कोशं च भरतो नोपलक्ष्यते ॥ ११ ॥

"Where does the mighty-armed prince (Rāma),—who is possessed of great might and resembles (in delighting all) the banner raised in honour of the mighty Indra on the 12th of the bright half of Bhādrapada as a mark of festivities—repose placing his arm, stout as an iron club, under his head for support ? (7) When shall I behold (again) the exquisite countenance of Rāma, which possesses the hue of a lotus (leaf) and is decked with lovely locks, (nay) whose breath emits the fragrance of a lotus and which is possessed of lotus-like eyes ? (8) Surely my heart is made of a substance as hard as adamant: there is no doubt about it, as (is clear from the fact that) it does not break into a thousand pieces even while I do not behold him ! (9) (Indeed) it was a cruel act (on your part) that, expelled by you, my near and dear ones, who were deserving of comforts, knock about in a wretched condition in the forest, leaving the city ! (10) (Even) if Rāma (a scion of Raghu) returns (to Ayodhya) in the fifteenth year, it is not expected that Bharata will relinquish the sovereignty and the exchequer. (11)

भोजयन्ति किल श्राद्धे केचित् स्वानेव बान्धवान् । ततः पश्चात् समीक्षन्ते कृतकार्या द्विजोत्तमान् ॥ १२ ॥
तत्र ये गुणवन्तश्च विद्वांसश्च द्विजातयः । न पश्चात् तेऽभिमन्यन्ते सुधामपि सुरोपमाः ॥ १३ ॥
ब्राह्मणेष्वपि वृत्तेषु भुक्तशेषं द्विजोत्तमाः । नाभ्युपेतुमलं प्राज्ञाः शृङ्गच्छेदमिवर्षभाः ॥ १४ ॥
एवं कनीयसा भ्रात्रा भुक्तं राज्यं विशाम्पते । भ्राता ज्येष्ठो वरिष्ठश्च किमर्थं नावमन्यते ॥ १५ ॥
न परेणाहृतं भक्ष्यं व्याघ्रः खादितुमिच्छति । एवमेव नरव्याघ्रः परलीढं न मंस्यते ॥ १६ ॥
हविराज्यं पुरोडाशः कुशा यूपाश्च खादिराः । नैतानि यातयामानि कुर्वन्ति पुनरध्वरे ॥ १७ ॥
तथा ह्यात्तमिदं राज्यं हृतसारां सुरामिव । नाभिमन्तुमलं रामो नष्टसोममिवाध्वरम् ॥ १८ ॥
नैवंविधमसत्कारं राघवो मर्षयिष्यति । बलवानिव शार्दूलो बालधेरभिमर्शनम् ॥ १९ ॥

"It is a well-known fact that some householders feed their own relations (daughter's sons and others) on the occasion of a Śrāddha (a ceremony in honour and for the benefit of dead relatives on their death anniversary and at other times) and their object (in the shape of making special gifts in their favour) having been accomplished, attend to the foremost of (other) Brahmans (invited for the Śrāddha) afterwards. (12) Of them such Brahmans as are men of character, learned and godlike do not accept afterwards even food which is delicious as ambrosia. (13) Even though it may be Brahmans that have finished their meals (in the first instance), great Brahmans, who are highly enlightened, would not consent to partake of what is left after others have finished their meal, any more than bulls of excellent breed would brook the severance of their horns. (14) Why (then) will Rāma (who is the eldest and most deserving brother) not likewise disdain a kingship (already) enjoyed by a younger brother, O ruler of the people ? (15) A tiger would not partake of the food brought by another; even so Rāma (a tiger among men) would not set his heart on that which has been enjoyed by another. (16) The wise do not use for a second time in a sacrifice the following

already used (in another sacrifice), *viz*, sacrificial food, ghee, Puroḍāśa (a mass of ground rice rounded into a kind of cake, usually divided into pieces placed on receptacles and offered as an oblation in fire), blades of Kuśa grass and sacrificial posts of Khadira wood. (17) Even so Rāma (too) will not be able to accept this sovereignty already enjoyed (by Bharata), any more than one would set one's heart on wine deprived of its essence or on the remnants of the beverage called Soma, which is drunk during sacrificial performances. (18) Rāma (a scion of Raghu) will not suffer such indignity any more than a mighty tiger would brook the twisting of its tail. (19)

नैतस्य सहिता लोका भयं कुर्युर्महामृधे । अधर्मं त्विह धर्मात्मा लोकं धर्मेण योजयेत् ॥ २० ॥
नन्वसौ काञ्चनैर्बाणैर्महावीर्यो महाभुजः । युगान्त इव भूतानि सागरानपि निर्दहेत् ॥ २१ ॥
स तादृशः सिंहबलो वृषभाक्षो नरर्षभः । स्वयमेव हतः पित्रा जलजेनात्मजो यथा ॥ २२ ॥
द्विजातिचरितो धर्मः शास्त्रे दृष्टः सनातनैः । यदि ते धर्मनिरते त्वया पुत्रे विवासिते ॥ २३ ॥
गतिरेका पतिर्नार्या द्वितीया गतिरात्मजः । तृतीया ज्ञातयो राजंश्चतुर्थी नैव विद्यते ॥ २४ ॥
तत्र त्वं मम नैवासि रामश्च वनमाहितः । न वनं गन्तुमिच्छामि सर्वथा हा हता त्वया ॥ २५ ॥
हतं त्वया राष्ट्रमिदं सराज्यं हताः स्म सर्वाः सह मन्त्रिभिश्च ।
हता सपुत्रास्मि हताश्च पौराः सुतश्च भार्या च तव प्रहृष्टौ ॥ २६ ॥

(All) the worlds combined (against him) would not be able to inspire terror into him (even) in a major conflict. He (however) did not wrest the throne of Ayodhya (even though capable of doing so) because, his mind being intent on righteousness, he is vowed to lead (even) unrighteous people towards righteousness (by setting a noble example before them). (20) That mighty-armed prince, possessed as he is of extraordinary might, can, if he so wills, even dry up the oceans by his shafts with gilded feathers (even) as the god of destruction dissolves the elements at the time of universal dissolution. (21) That jewel among men, who is so powerful as indicated above, nay, who possesses the strength of a lion and has eyes big as those of a bull, has been ruined by his own father even as the brood of a fish are devoured by the fish itself. (22) A son who is deeply devoted to righteousness having been exiled by you, it is problematic whether the path of virtue discovered by the ancient sages and followed by the twice-born really exists in your eyes. (23) The main support of a woman is her husband, the second is her son, the third is her kindred, there is no fourth support at all, O king ! (24) Of the aforementioned (three) supports, you (my husband) are surely no support for me (inasmuch as you are under the thumb of my co-wife,) while Rāma has been sent away to the forest. I do not wish to proceed to the forest (since I cannot live apart from you). (In this way) alas ! I have been utterly destroyed by you. (25) This kingdom (of Kosala) along with other (neighbouring) kingdoms has been ruined by you. Nay, we all (your people) along with the counsellors have been destroyed by you. I stand doomed with my son (Rāma). The citizens too have been ruined. Only your son (Bharata) and wife (Kaikeyī) feel greatly delighted." (26)

इमां गिरं दारुणशब्दसंहितां निशम्य रामेति मुमोह दुःखितः ।
ततः स शोकं प्रविवेश पार्थिवः स्वदुष्कृतं चापि पुनस्तथास्मरत् ॥ २७ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे एकषष्टितमः सर्गः ॥ ६१ ॥

Distressed to hear this condemnation (of the emperor by Kausalyā), couched in harsh words, the emperor fell into a swoon, crying "O Rāma !" He then got plunged in grief and also vividly recalled once more his (past) misdeed (responsible for his present calamity). (27)

Thus ends Canto Sixty-one in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

द्विषष्टितमः सर्गः

Canto LXII

When reproached in harsh words by Kausalyā, though already feeling disconsolate through separation from his sons and daughter-in-law, Daśaratha falls into a swoon recalling his past sin in the form of killing a hermit boy, which was responsible for his present misfortune. On waking from his swoon he tries with joined palms to conciliate Kausalyā and on the latter reciprocating his sentiments, the emperor is lulled into a nap.

एवं तु क्रुद्धया राजा राममात्रा सशोकया । श्रावितः परुषं वाक्यं चिन्तयामास दुःखितः ॥ १ ॥
चिन्तयित्वा स च नृपो मोहव्याकुलितेन्द्रियः । अथ दीर्घेण कालेन संज्ञामाप परंतपः ॥ २ ॥
स संज्ञामुपलभ्यैव दीर्घमुष्णं च निःश्वसन् । कौसल्यां पार्श्वतो दृष्ट्वा ततश्चिन्तामुपागमत् ॥ ३ ॥
तस्य चिन्तयमानस्य प्रत्यभात्. कर्म दुष्कृतम् । यदनेन कृतं पूर्वमज्ञानाच्छब्दवेधिना ॥ ४ ॥
अमनास्तेन शोकेन रामशोकेन च प्रभुः । द्वाभ्यामपि महाराजः शोकाभ्यामभितप्यते ॥ ५ ॥
दह्यमानस्तु शोकाभ्यां कौसल्यामाह दुःखितः । वेपमानोऽञ्जलिं कृत्वा प्रसादार्थमवाङ्मुखः ॥ ६ ॥

Told harsh words as aforesaid by the angry Kausalyā (Śrī Rāma's mother), who was full of grief, the king for his part felt distressed and fell a brooding. (1) Nay, having reflected (a while) the aforesaid monarch found his senses confused due to (a spell of) unconsciousness. And it was after a long time that the emperor (who was noted for subduing his enemies) regained consciousness. (2) Again, heaving a doleful sigh immediately on regaining consciousness, he relapsed into brooding on seeing Kausalyā by his side. (3) (Even) as he reflected, the sinful deed that had been unwittingly perpetrated by him in the past while hitting a mark (screened from sight) with the help of sound (alone) flashed on his mind. (4) The mighty emperor felt disconcerted through remorse caused by the thought (of that sinful deed) as well as through grief born of separation from Śrī Rāma and was tormented with the dual grief. (5) Joining his palms in order to propitiate Kausalyā, the king, who was being consumed by the twofold grief and was feeling afflicted (thereby), spoke trembling (as follows) to Kausalyā, his face hanging downward:— (6)

प्रसादये त्वां कौसल्ये रचितोऽयं मयाञ्जलिः । वत्सला चानृशंसा च त्वं हि नित्यं परेष्वपि ॥ ७ ॥
भर्ता तु खलु नारीणां गुणवान् निर्गुणोऽपि वा । धर्मं विमृशमानानां प्रत्यक्षं देवि दैवतम् ॥ ८ ॥
सा त्वं धर्मपरा नित्यं दृष्टलोकपरावरा । नार्हसे विप्रियं वक्तुं दुःखितापि सुदुःखितम् ॥ ९ ॥
तद् वाक्यं करुणं राज्ञः श्रुत्वा दीनस्य भाषितम् । कौसल्या व्यसृजद् बाष्पं प्रणालीव नवोदकम् ॥ १० ॥
सा मूर्ध्नि बद्ध्वा रुदती राज्ञः पद्ममिवाञ्जलिम् । सम्भ्रमादब्रवीत् त्रस्ता त्वरमाणाक्षरं वचः ॥ ११ ॥

"I seek your favour, O Kausalyā ! Here is my supplication to you (with joined palms). In fact you are ever full of affection even to your enemies and tender-hearted. (7) The husband for his part, be he full of virtues or even lacking in them, is indeed a visible deity to ladies knowing what is right, O godly lady ! (8) Though afflicted, you, who are not only conversant with the principles of righteousness of every kind but also ever devoted to righteousness and have seen (both) good and evil fortune in the world, ought not to have told me unpalatable things, greatly afflicted as I am." (9) Hearing that piteous appeal uttered by the wretched king, Kausalyā shed tears (even) as a drain allows rain water to flow through it. (10) Interlocking on her (own) head the king's palms joined in the form of a lotus, Kausalyā, who felt dismayed (with the thought of having wronged her husband), spoke weeping in hurried tones through confusion (as follows):—(11)

प्रसीद शिरसा याचे भूमौ निपतितास्मि ते । याचितास्मि हता देव क्षन्तव्याहं नहि त्वया ॥ १२ ॥
नैषा हि सा स्त्री भवति श्लाघनीयेन धीमता । उभयोर्लोकयोर्लोके पत्या या सम्प्रसाद्यते ॥ १३ ॥
जानामि धर्मं धर्मज्ञ त्वां जाने सत्यवादिनम् । पुत्रशोकार्तया तत्तु मया किमपि भाषितम् ॥ १४ ॥
शोको नाशयते धैर्यं शोको नाशयते श्रुतम् । शोको नाशयते सर्वं नास्ति शोकसमो रिपुः ॥ १५ ॥
शक्यमापतितः सोढुं प्रहारो रिपुहस्ततः । सोढुमापतितः शोकः सुसूक्ष्मोऽपि न शक्यते ॥ १६ ॥
वनवासाय रामस्य पञ्चरात्रोऽत्र गण्यते । यः शोकहतहर्षायाः पञ्चवर्षोपमो मम ॥ १७ ॥
तं हि चिन्तयमानायाः शोकोऽयं हृदि वर्धते । नदीनामिव वेगेन समुद्रसलिलं महत् ॥ १८ ॥
एवं हि कथयन्त्यास्तु कौसल्यायाः शुभं वचः । मन्दरश्मिरभूत् सूर्यो रजनी चाभ्यवर्तत ॥ १९ ॥
अथ प्रह्लादितो वाक्यैर्देव्या कौसल्यया नृपः । शोकेन च समाक्रान्तो निद्राया वशमेयिवान् ॥ २० ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे द्विषष्टितमः सर्गः ॥ ६२ ॥

"Be gracious (to me)! I entreat you with bowed head and lie prostrate (at your feet). Since I have been entreated by you (my superior, which is a matter for shame to me), I am ruined. In any case I do not deserve to be pardoned by you (and court punishment at your hands for the wrong done by me to you). (12) Surely she is not a woman of noble descent, who is earnestly propitiated by her wise husband, who is praiseworthy (adorable) for her in both the worlds. (13) I know my duty (towards you), O knower of what is right, and (also) know you to be veracious. Something unseemly was, however, uttered by me, stricken as I was with grief caused by separation from my son. (14) Grief eradicates patience, grief effaces learning. Grief destroys all, there is no enemy like grief. (15) A blow that has descended from the hands of an enemy can be sustained. Grief (however) that has appeared all of a sudden cannot be endured even though it is very minute. (16) The period of five nights that has elapsed since Rāma left

for sojourning in the forest is reckoned as equal (in length) to five years at this moment by me, whose joy has been marred by grief. (17) Even as I think of Rāma, this grief (born of separation from him) abiding in my breast grows (in intensity), in the same way as the water of an ocean swells with the rapid inflow of rivers." (18) While Kausalyā was speaking conciliatory words as aforesaid, the sun's rays became faint and the night prevailed. (19) Cheered by Queen Kausalyā in so many words and overpowered by grief, the king forthwith fell into the grip of slumber. (20)

Thus ends Canto Sixty-two in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

त्रिषष्टितमः सर्गः

Canto LXIII

Waking from sleep after a while and recalling his sinful deed, which spelt death to him, Daśaratha proceeds to tell Kausalyā how, while he was Prince Regent of Ayodhya, he went out a hunting in the forest one day and heard during the last watch of the night the sound of a hermit boy filling his pitcher with water by submerging it into Sarayu river. Mistaking the gurgling sound for the trumpeting of an elephant, the prince hit the boy with an arrow, which dug deep into his body and mortally wounded him. On approaching his quarry he discovered the fatal blunder and tendered his heartfelt apology to the hermit boy, who asked him to extract the arrow from his body and report the matter to his aged parents. The boy died immediately the arrow was taken out of his body.

प्रतिबुद्धो मुहूर्तेन शोकोपहतचेतनः । अथ राजा दशरथः स चिन्तामभ्यपद्यत ॥ १ ॥
रामलक्ष्मणयोश्चैव विवासाद् वासवोपमम् । आपेदे उपसर्गस्तं तमः सूर्यमिवासुरम् ॥ २ ॥
सभार्ये हि गते रामे कौसल्यां कोसलेश्वरः । विवक्षुरसितापाङ्गीं स्मृत्वा दुष्कृतमात्मनः ॥ ३ ॥
स राजा रजनीं षष्ठीं रामे प्रव्राजिते वनम् । अर्धरात्रे दशरथः सोऽस्मरद् दुष्कृतं कृतम् ॥ ४ ॥
स राजा पुत्रशोकार्तः स्मृत्वा दुष्कृतमात्मनः । कौसल्यां पुत्रशोकार्तामिदं वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ ५ ॥

Having awoke from sleep after an hour or so, the said King Daśaratha, whose mind was obscured through grief, (now) fell a prey to anxiety. (1) Consequent on the banishment of Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa grief had seized the king, who vied (in might and splendour) with Indra (the ruler of gods), (even) as obscurity, which is attributed to the demon Rāhu (also recognized as a planet), seizes the sun (at the time of a solar eclipse). (2) Recollecting his misdeed (as responsible for his present misfortune in the shape of separation from his sons and daughter-in-law) when Śrī Rāma had actually

departed (for the forest) with his wife (and Lakṣmaṇa), Daśaratha (the king of Kosala) felt inclined to tell Kausalyā, the corners of whose eyes were noted for their dark colour, (all) about it. (3) On the sixth night after Śrī Rāma had been sent into exile the celebrated King Daśaratha remembered at midnight the misdeed perpetrated (by him) (4) Recollecting his misdeed, the aforesaid monarch, who was stricken with grief caused by separation from his son, spoke as follows to Kausalyā, who was (equally) stricken with grief born of separation from her son:— (5)

यदाचरति कल्याणि शुभं वा यदि वाशुभम् । तदेव लभते भद्रे कर्ता कर्मजमात्मनः ॥ ६ ॥
गुरुलाघवमर्थानामारम्भे कर्मणां फलम् । दोषं वा यो न जानाति स बाल इति होच्यते ॥ ७ ॥
कश्चिदाम्रवणं छित्त्वा पलाशांश्च निषिञ्चति । पुष्पं दृष्ट्वा फले गृध्नुः स शोचति फलागमे ॥ ८ ॥
अविज्ञाय फलं यो हि कर्म त्वेवानुधावति । स शोचेत् फलवेलायां यथा किंशुकसेचकः ॥ ९ ॥
सोऽहमाम्रवणं छित्त्वा पलाशांश्च न्यषेचयम् । रामं फलागमे त्यक्त्वा पश्चाच्छोचामि दुर्मतिः ॥ १० ॥

"A doer surely reaps, O blessed lady, the fruit of his own deeds corresponding to the nature, good or evil, of that which he does, O gracious one ! (6) He who does not reckon, while undertaking actions, the relative importance of their fruits as well as the advantages or disadvantages accruing from them is surely dubbed as a fool. (7) Anyone who, cutting down a (whole) mango grove (because of its unattractive and tiny blossoms) nourishes (a cluster of) Palāśa trees expecting (large and luscious) fruits on seeing their (charming and big) flowers repents at the time of their fruition. (8) Indeed like the man who nourishes a Kiṃśuka tree, he who embarks on action alone, not minding the consequences, is sure to repent when the action bears fruit. (9) Cutting down a mango grove I have accordingly watered Palāśa trees and sending away Rāma (to the forest) at a time when the said mango grove was going to bear fruit, I repent, a fool that I am ! (10)

लब्धशब्देन कौसल्ये कुमारेण धनुष्मता । कुमारः शब्दवेधीति मया पापमिदं कृतम् ॥ ११ ॥
तदिदं मेऽनुसम्प्राप्तं देवि दुःखं स्वयंकृतम् । सम्मोहादिह बालेन यथा स्याद् भक्षितं विषम् ॥ १२ ॥
यथान्यः पुरुषः कश्चित् पलाशैर्मोहितो भवेत् । एवं मयाप्यविज्ञातं शब्दवेध्यमिदं फलम् ॥ १३ ॥
देव्यनूढा त्वमभवो युवराजो भवाम्यहम् । ततः प्रावृडनुप्राप्ता मम कामविवर्धिनी ॥ १४ ॥

"The sin which I am going to describe (now) was perpetrated by me, O Kausalyā, while I was (yet) a prince wielding a bow (and arrows) and had won the title of a prince clever in hitting an invisible mark with the help of a sound made by it. (11) This disaster, which was earned by myself, has been reaped by me, O godly lady, in the same way as poison may be swallowed by a child through excessive folly. (12) (Even) as a common man would be deluded by the (charming red) blossoms of a Palāśa tree (and misled to think that it would yield equally large and delicious fruits), so it was never suspected by me that the dexterity (acquired by me) in hitting an invisible mark with the help of its sound would yield such a disastrous result. (13) You were not married (with me till then), O pious lady, and I was (only) Prince Regent (at that time). Then set in the monsoon, which keenly enhanced my passion (for hunting). (14)

अपास्य हि रसान् भौमांस्तप्त्वा च जगदंशुभिः । परेताचरितां भीमां रविराचरते दिशम् ॥ १५ ॥
उष्णमन्तर्दधे सद्यः स्निग्धा ददृशिरे घनाः । ततो जहृषिरे सर्वे भेकसारङ्गबर्हिणः ॥ १६ ॥
क्लिन्नपक्षोत्तराः स्नाताः कृच्छ्रादिव पतत्रिणः । वृष्टिवातावधूताग्रान् पादपानभिपेदिरे ॥ १७ ॥
पतितेनाम्भसाऽऽच्छन्नः पतमानेन चासकृत् । आबभौ मत्तसारङ्गस्तोयराशिरिवाचलः ॥ १८ ॥
पाण्डुरारुणवर्णानि स्रोतांसि विमलान्यपि । सुस्रुवुर्गिरिधातुभ्यः सभस्मानि भुजंगवत् ॥ १९ ॥

"Sucking the moisture of the earth and scorching the world with its rays, the sun had begun to course through the (southern) quarter haunted by spirits and therefore exciting fear. (15) Clouds laden with moisture appeared (in the sky) and the heat vanished all of a sudden. Frogs, the Chātaka birds and peacocks all rejoiced in consequence. (16) Birds, which had the upper part of their wings drenched and which (therefore) looked as though bathed, could reach with difficulty the trees (on which they had nestled and), whose ends were shaken by rain and the winds. (17) Covered by the (rain) water (already) fallen and (still) repeatedly falling (on it), the mountain with elephants in rut looked like an ocean. (18) Cascades carrying transparent waters ran in a serpentine course assuming a white, ruddy and ashy colour (on the way) due to contact with mountain-minerals (of those colours). (19)

तस्मिन्नतिसुखे काले धनुष्मानिषुमान् रथी । व्यायामकृतसंकल्पः सरयूमन्वगां नदीम् ॥ २० ॥
निपाने महिषं रात्रौ गजं वाभ्यागतं मृगम् । अन्यद् वा श्वापदं किंचिज्जिघांसुरजितेन्द्रियः ॥ २१ ॥
अथान्धकारे त्वश्रौषं जले कुम्भस्य पूर्यतः । अचक्षुर्विषये घोषं वारणस्येव नर्दतः ॥ २२ ॥
ततोऽहं शरमुद्धृत्य दीप्तमाशीविषोपमम् । शब्दं प्रति गजप्रेप्सुरभिलक्ष्यमपातयम् ॥ २३ ॥
अमुञ्चं निशितं बाणमहमाशीविषोपमम् । तत्र वागुषसि व्यक्ता प्रादुरासीद् वनौकसः ॥ २४ ॥
हा हेति पततस्तोये बाणाद् व्यथितमर्मणः । तस्मिन्निपतिते भूमौ वागभूत् तत्र मानुषी ॥ २५ ॥

"Having made up my mind to take some exercise (by way of hunting), and with my senses uncontrolled, I drove at that most agreeable period in a chariot to the river Sarayu, equipped with a bow and arrows and wishing to hunt at night a (wild) buffalo, an elephant or any other beast of prey or deer, accidentally arrived at some ford (in the river). (20-21) Presently in the darkness I for my part heard the sound of a pitcher being filled in with water (of the river), resembling the sound of a trumpeting elephant, at a place which was not before my eyes. (22) Taking out (from my quiver) an effulgent arrow, resembling a snake (in its deadly effect), I then discharged it in the direction of the sound in the hope of hitting the mark, as I wished to bag the elephant (after killing it). (23) In the quarter where I hurled my sharp arrow, resembling a snake (in its deadly effect), there emerged in the dawn the clear wail of a dweller in the forest dropping down in water, his vital part tormented with pain caused by the arrow. On his having dropped down to the ground issued forth on that (very) spot a human voice saying:—(24-25)

कथमस्मद्विधे शस्त्रं निपतेच्च तपस्विनि । प्रविविक्तां नदीं रात्रावुदाहारोऽहमागतः ॥ २६ ॥
इषुणाभिहतः केन कस्य वापकृतं मया । ऋषेर्हि न्यस्तदण्डस्य वने वन्येन जीवतः ॥ २७ ॥
कथं नु शस्त्रेण वधो मद्विधस्य विधीयते । जटाभारधरस्यैव वल्कलाजिनवाससः ॥ २८ ॥

को वधेन ममार्थी स्यात् किं वास्यापकृतं मया । एवं निष्फलमारब्धं केवलानर्थसंहितम् ॥ २९ ॥
न क्वचित् साधु मन्येत यथैव गुरुतल्पगम् । नेमं तथानुशोचामि जीवितक्षयमात्मनः ॥ ३० ॥
मातरं पितरं चोभावनुशोचामि मद्वधे । तदेतन्मिथुनं वृद्धं चिरकालभृतं मया ॥ ३१ ॥
मयि पञ्चत्वमापन्ने कां वृत्तिं वर्तयिष्यति । वृद्धौ च मातापितरावहं चैकेषुणा हतः ॥ ३२ ॥
केन स्म निहताः सर्वे सुबालेनाकृतात्मना ।

" 'How could a weapon descend on an ascetic like myself (who can have no enemy) ? I came at (the close of) night to this exceedingly lonely river (bank) with the intention of drawing water. (26) By whom have I been hit with an arrow ? Or to whom could offence have been given by me, a seer who has forsworn (every form of) violence and who was living in a forest on the produce of the forest ? (27) How can the killing by means of a weapon of an ascetic like me, wearing a mass of matted hair (on his head) and clad in the bark of trees and deer-skin, be enjoined (by the scriptures) ? (28) Who can have any interest in killing me or what offence has been given by me to the man who has hit me with an arrow ? In this way a futile act has been done by him, and an act which will be attended with evil consequences alone. (29) Nowhere will anyone admire him any more than one would admire a man seeking the bed of his preceptor's wife. I do not grieve for this loss of my life so much as for (the fate of) my father and mother both on my expiry. By what means of subsistence will this aged couple, maintained for long by me, support themselves when I have met my end ? My aged parents as well as myself stand killed with a single arrow. By what ignorant fool of an uncontrolled mind have we all been done to death ?'

तां गिरं करुणां श्रुत्वा मम धर्मानुकाङ्क्षिणः ॥ ३३ ॥
कराभ्यां सशरं चापं व्यथितस्यापतद् भुवि । तस्याहं करुणं श्रुत्वा ऋषेर्विलपतो निशि ॥ ३४ ॥
सम्भ्रान्तः शोकवेगेन भृशमासं विचेतनः । तं देशमहमागम्य दीनसत्त्वः सुदुर्मनाः ॥ ३५ ॥
अपश्यमिषुणा तीरे सरय्वास्तापसं हतम् । अवकीर्णजटाभारं प्रविद्धकलशोदकम् ॥ ३६ ॥
पांसुशोणितदिग्धाङ्गं शयानं शल्यवेधितम् । स मामुद्वीक्ष्य नेत्राभ्यां त्रस्तमस्वस्थचेतनम् ॥ ३७ ॥
इत्युवाच वचः क्रूरं दिधक्षन्निव तेजसा ।

"The bow with an arrow (which I held in my hands at the moment) dropped from my hands to the ground, distressed as I was to hear that plaintive cry, and sought (only) to do what is right. Hearing the piteous lament of the seer, who was wailing during (the close of) the night, I lost my consciousness again and again, utterly confounded as I was due to the outburst of grief. Reaching the place where he lay, distressed in mind and extremely sad at heart as I was, I beheld the ascetic lying on the bank of the Sarayu, struck with an arrow and pierced with its point, the mass of matted hair (on his head) put out of order, the water of his pitcher run out and his limbs besmeared with dust and blood. Staring at me, who stood alarmed and sick in mind, with his (bloodshot) eyes as if going to consume me with his glory, he addressed the following harsh words (to me):—

किं तवापकृतं राजन् वने निवसता मया ॥ ३८ ॥
जिहीर्षुरम्भो गुर्वर्थे यदहं ताडितस्त्वया । एकेन खलु बाणेन मर्मण्यभिहते मयि ॥ ३९ ॥

द्वावन्धौ निहतौ वृद्धौ माता जनयिता च मे । तौ नूनं दुर्बलावन्धौ मत्प्रतीक्षौ पिपासितौ ॥ ४० ॥
चिरमाशां कृतां कष्टां तृष्णां संधारयिष्यतः । न नूनं तपसो वास्ति फलयोगः श्रुतस्य वा ॥ ४१ ॥
पिता यन्मां न जानीते शयानं पतितं भुवि । जानन्नपि च किं कुर्यादशक्तश्चापरिक्रमः ॥ ४२ ॥
भिद्यमानमिवाशक्तस्त्रातुमन्यो नगो नगम् । पितुस्त्वमेव मे गत्वा शीघ्रमाचक्ष्व राघव ॥ ४३ ॥
न त्वामनुदहेत् क्रुद्धो वनमग्निरिवैधितः । इयमेकपदी राजन् यतो मे पितुराश्रमः ॥ ४४ ॥
तं प्रसादय गत्वा त्वं न त्वा संकुपितः शपेत् । विशल्यं कुरु मां राजन् मर्म मे निशितः शरः ॥ ४५ ॥
रुणद्धि मृदु सोत्सेधं तीरमम्बुरयो यथा ।

'What wrong was done by me to you, O king, living as I did in the forest, that while inlening to take water for my parents I was hit by you? On my being hit in a vital part with a single arrow, my blind and aged mother and father both have been virtually killed. Feeble, blind and thirsty, they must be (anxiously) waiting for me and will be cherishing since long the hope of getting water, placed in me, and enduring their painful thirst. Surely askesis or learning has not (yet) borne fruit (in my case or in the case of my father); for my father does not know (anything) about myself having fallen down (mortally wounded) and lying on the ground. Even if he knew, what could he do, feeble and unable as he is to move, and (in this way) as incapable of protecting me as any tree is incapable of protecting a (neighbouring) tree which is going to be rent asunder. Seeking the presence of my father, O scion of Raghu, speak you alone to him speedily (about me). (30—43) (If you take courage in both hands and confess your guilt before him, I am sure) he will not burn you in his wrath as a swollen fire would consume a forest. Here is the track by which my father's hermitage can be reached. (44) Approaching him, seek his forgiveness lest he should get enraged and execrate you. Render me free from pain (by extracting the shaft from my body), O king, since your sharp-pointed arrow torments my vital part in the same way as a river-current corrodes a high sandy bank.'

सशल्यः क्लिश्यते प्राणैर्विशल्यो विनशिष्यति ॥ ४६ ॥
इति मामविशच्चिन्ता तस्य शल्यापकर्षणे । दुःखितस्य च दीनस्य मम शोकातुरस्य च ॥ ४७ ॥
लक्षयामास स ऋषिश्चिन्तां मुनिसुतस्तदा । ताम्यमानं स मां कृच्छ्रादुवाच परमार्थवित् ॥ ४८ ॥
सीदमानो विवृत्ताङ्गोऽचेष्टमानो गतः क्षयम् । संस्तभ्य शोकं धैर्येण स्थिरचित्तो भवाम्यहम् ॥ ४९ ॥
ब्रह्महत्याकृतं तापं हृदयादपनीयताम् । न द्विजातिरहं राजन् मा भूत् ते मनसो व्यथा ॥ ५० ॥
शूद्रायामस्मि वैश्येन जातो नरवराधिप । इतीव वदतः कृच्छ्राद् बाणाभिहतमर्मणः ॥ ५१ ॥
विघूर्णतो विचेष्टस्य वेपमानस्य भूतले ।
तस्य त्वाताम्यमानस्य तं बाणमहमुद्धरम् । स मामुद्वीक्ष्य संत्रस्तो जहौ प्राणांस्तपोधनः ॥ ५२ ॥
जलार्द्रगात्रं तु विलप्य कृच्छ्रं मर्मव्रणं संततमुच्छ्वसन्तम् ।
ततः सरय्वां तमहं शयानं समीक्ष्य भद्रे सुभृशं विषण्णः ॥ ५३ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे त्रिषष्टितमः सर्गः ॥ ६३ ॥

"While I was going to extract the arrow from his body, the following thought entered my mind. 'With the arrow (still rankling) in his body the hermit boy will (continue to) suffer, even though he will survive, while he

will (surely) expire the moment the shaft is removed from his body.' That sage son of a hermit immediately perceived my anxiety, distressed, miserable and stricken with grief as I was. The hermit boy, who knew the essence of the scriptures, spoke with difficulty (as follows) to me, who was feeling perplexed in mind:—(45-48) 'Though getting faint and motionless, with my eyes turned round, since I have approached my end, I am trying to compose my mind, restraining my grief by recourse to firmness. (49) Let agony caused by the thought of your having killed a Brahman be driven from your heart. I am not a Brahman, O king; (hence) let there be no anguish in your mind (on that score). (50) I was procreated by a Vaiśya through a Śūdra woman, O ruler of the foremost of men !' While he was speaking as aforesaid with difficulty, his vital part having been smitten with the arrow, and was now rolling on the ground, now tossing about, now quivering and now fainting, I took out that arrow from his body. Looking dismayed (due to anxiety on the score of his parents) at me, the boy, whose (only) wealth was his asceticism, gave up the ghost. (51-52) I felt extremely sad, O blessed lady, to behold him sighing again and again after speaking out his mind with difficulty, his vital part having been injured, and then lying (dead) on the bank of the Sarayu, drenched all over his body with water." (53)

Thus ends Canto Sixty-three in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

चतुःषष्टितमः सर्गः

Canto LXIV

Daśaratha continues to tell Kausalyā how, having sought the presence of the aged parents of the deceased, he apprised them of the sad incident and escorted them to the river bank, where their son lay dead; how, clasping the boy to their bosom, they both piteously wailed and offered libations of water to his spirit for its benefit; how, invested with an ethereal body, the spirit ascended to heaven while consoling the aged couple and finally how, having cursed the king that he too would meet his death in his agony of separation from his son, the ascetic couple gave up the ghost and attained the Supreme. Having thus related the story of his imprecation and loudly lamenting, the emperor breathes his last with the thought of Śrī Rāma foremost in his mind.

वधमप्रतिरूपं तु महर्षेस्तस्य राघवः । विलपन्नेव धर्मात्मा कौसल्यामिदमब्रवीत् ॥ १ ॥
तदज्ञानान्महत्पापं कृत्वा संकुलितेन्द्रियः । एकस्त्वचिन्तयं बुद्ध्या कथं नु सुकृतं भवेत् ॥ २ ॥
ततस्तं घटमादाय पूर्णं परमवारिणा । आश्रमं तमहं प्राप्य यथाख्यातपथं गतः ॥ ३ ॥
तत्राहं दुर्बलावन्धौ वृद्धावपरिणायकौ । अपश्यं तस्य पितरौ लूनपक्षाविव द्विजौ ॥ ४ ॥

तन्निमित्ताभिरासीनौ कथाभिरपरिश्रमौ । तामाशां मत्कृते हीनावुपासीनावनाथवत् ॥ ५ ॥
शोकोपहतचित्तश्च भयसंत्रस्तचेतनः । तच्चाश्रमपदं गत्वा भूयः शोकमहं गतः ॥ ६ ॥
पदशब्दं तु मे श्रुत्वा मुनिर्वाक्यमभाषत । किं चिरायसि मे पुत्र पानीयं क्षिप्रमानय ॥ ७ ॥
यन्निमित्तमिदं तात सलिले क्रीडितं त्वया । उत्कण्ठिता ते मातेयं प्रविश क्षिप्रमाश्रमम् ॥ ८ ॥
यद् व्यलीकं कृतं पुत्र मात्रा ते यदि वा मया । न तन्मनसि कर्तव्यं त्वया तात तपस्विना ॥ ९ ॥
त्वं गतिस्त्वगतीनां च चक्षुस्त्वं हीनचक्षुषाम् । समासक्तास्त्वयि प्राणाः कथं त्वं नाभिभाषसे ॥ १० ॥
मुनिमव्यक्तया वाचा तमहं सज्जमानया । हीनव्यञ्जनया प्रेक्ष्य भीतचित्त इवाब्रुवम् ॥ ११ ॥
मनसः कर्म चेष्टाभिरभिसंस्तभ्य वाग्बलम् । आचचक्षे त्वहं तस्मै पुत्रव्यसनजं भयम् ॥ १२ ॥

Recalling how that great seer was killed undeservedly (by him), the pious-minded Daśaratha (a scion of Raghu) for his part continued to speak as follows to Kausalyā, mourning (all the time for his son):—(1) "Having perpetrated through ignorance that egregious sin, I thought with the help of my reason, my senses being utterly confounded and I being alone, how good luck may yet attend on me. (2) Taking that pitcher (left by the deceased) when it had been filled with excellent water (of the Sarayu), and proceeding along the track (already) pointed out (by the hermit boy), I reached the hermitage referred to by the deceased. (3) There I saw his feeble, blind and aged parents, with none to conduct them here and there and resembling a pair of birds whose wings had been clipped. (4) Remaining occupied with talks concerning their (only) son, they sat free from ennui and like two forlorn persons they (fondly) hugged the hope of meeting their son, though deprived of it through my agency. (5) My intellect being (already) clouded with grief and my mind dismayed through apprehension (of incurring the displeasure of the ascetic couple), I fell a prey to further grief on reaching the site of that hermitage. (6) Hearing my footfalls, the sage for his part spoke as follows:—'Why are you tarrying, my son? (Pray) bring water immediately. (7) Your mother here is seized with anxiety because, O dear son, you have sported in water (so long); (pray) enter the hermitage without delay. (8) The offence, if any, that may have been given (to you) by your mother or myself, my son, should not be taken to heart by you, my child, an ascetic that you are. (9) You are our support, supportless as we are, nay, you are our eyesight, sightless as we are. Our senses are focussed on you. How (then) do you not speak (to me)?' (10) As though frightened in mind to behold the sage, I replied to him in faltering and inarticulate words lacking in certain consonants. (11) Fully controlling fear (which is an action of the mind) by means of outward signs (showing fearlessness) and acquiring the power of expression, I for my part told him (in the following words) of the fear that awaited him as a result of his son's death. (12)

क्षत्रियोऽहं दशरथो नाहं पुत्रो महात्मनः । सज्जनावमतं दुःखमिदं प्राप्तं स्वकर्मजम् ॥ १३ ॥
भगवंश्चापहस्तोऽहं सरयूतीरमागतः । जिघांसुः श्वापदं किंचिन्निपाने वाऽऽगतं गजम् ॥ १४ ॥
ततः श्रुतो मया शब्दो जले कुम्भस्य पूर्यतः । द्विपोऽयमिति मत्वाहं बाणेनाभिहतो मया ॥ १५ ॥
गत्वा तस्यास्ततस्तीरमपश्यमिषुणा हृदि । विनिर्भिन्नं गतप्राणं शयानं भुवि तापसम् ॥ १६ ॥
ततस्तस्यैव वचनादुपेत्य परितप्यतः । स मया सहसा बाण उद्धृतो मर्मतस्तदा ॥ १७ ॥

स चोद्धृतेन बाणेन सहसा स्वर्गमास्थितः । भगवन्तावुभौ शोचन्नन्धाबिति विलप्य च ॥ १८ ॥
अज्ञानाद् भवतः पुत्रः सहसाभिहतो मया । शेषमेवं गते यत् स्यात्तत्प्रसीदतु मे मुनिः ॥ १९ ॥

'I am a Kṣatriya, named Daśaratha, and not the son of your exalted self. As a result of my own action this agony, which is despised by noble men, has been reaped by me. (13) Desirous of killing any beast of prey or elephant arrived in a ford (for drinking water), I sought the bank of the Sarayu, bow in hand, O holy sage ! (14) Presently was heard by me the sound of a pitcher being filled in water. I stood unsuspecting, believing that it was an elephant (that was making the noise) and the living being (responsible for the sound) was hit by me with an arrow. (15) Proceeding to the bank of the river I immediately found an ascetic lying on the ground with his life (well-nigh) extinct, pierced as he was with the arrow in the heart. (16) Then, drawing near, at the instance of the ascetic himself, who had been suffering intense pain, the said arrow was immediately extracted from his vital part by me. (17) With the arrow extracted (from his bosom) the ascetic forthwith ascended to heaven, grieving for you both, and lamenting on the ground that you were blind. (18) Through ignorance your son has been rashly killed by me. Such being the case, may Your Holiness be pleased to direct what remains to be done.' (19)

स तच्छ्रुत्वा वचः क्रूरं मया तदघशंसिना । नाशकत् तीव्रमायासं स कर्तुं भगवानृषिः ॥ २० ॥
स बाष्पपूर्णवदनो निःश्वसञ्छोकमूर्च्छितः । मामुवाच महातेजाः कृताञ्जलिमुपस्थितम् ॥ २१ ॥
यद्येतदशुभं कर्म न स्म मे कथयेः स्वयम् । फलेन्मूर्धा स्म ते राजन् सद्यः शतसहस्रधा ॥ २२ ॥
क्षत्रियेण वधो राजन् वानप्रस्थे विशेषतः । ज्ञानपूर्वं कृतः स्थानाच्च्यावयेदपि वज्रिणम् ॥ २३ ॥
सप्तधा तु भवेन्मूर्धा मुनौ तपसि तिष्ठति । ज्ञानाद् विसृजतः शस्त्रं तादृशे ब्रह्मवादिनि ॥ २४ ॥
अज्ञानाद्धि कृतं यस्मादिदं ते तेन जीवसे । अपि ह्यकुशलं न स्याद् राघवाणां कुतो भवान् ॥ २५ ॥
नय नौ नृप तं देशमिति मां चाभ्यभाषत । अद्य तं द्रष्टुमिच्छावः पुत्रं पश्चिमदर्शनम् ॥ २६ ॥
रुधिरेणावसिक्ताङ्गं प्रकीर्णाजिनवाससम् । शयानं भुवि निस्संज्ञं धर्मराजवशं गतम् ॥ २७ ॥

"Hearing that cruel story related by me, who confessed the guilt, the aforesaid sage, though capable of pronouncing a terrible curse, could not do so (my sin having been attenuated by voluntary confession). (20) Stupefied through grief and sighing, his face bathed in tears, the sage, who was exceptionally glorious, replied (as follows) to me, who stood near him with joined palms:—(21) 'Had you not told me of this evil deed yourself, your head, O king, would have instantly split into a hundred or (even) thousand pieces. (22) The death of a hermit wittingly brought about by a Kṣatriya in particular, O king, is sure to bring down even Indra (the wielder of a thunderbolt) from his position. (23) Nay, the head of a man consciously hurling a weapon against such a hermit remaining engaged in austerities and expounding the Vedas is sure to split into seven. (24) Since this sinful deed has been done by you actually through ignorance, therefore you survive. Otherwise the race of the Raghus itself would have become extinct, much more you.' (25) The sage further said to me, 'Take us, O monarch, to that place (where my son is lying dead). We two long today to see that son (of ours)— whom (alas) we are going to see for the last time,— lying unconscious on the ground, transferred to the control of Dharmarāja

(the god of piety, who receives virtuous souls into his realm after death), his (whole) body bathed in blood and his robes of deerskin thrown about.' (26-27)

अथाहमेकस्तं देशं नीत्वा तौ भृशदुःखितौ । अस्पर्शयमहं पुत्रं तं मुनिं सह भार्यया ॥ २८ ॥
तौ पुत्रमात्मनः स्पृष्ट्वा तमासाद्य तपस्विनौ । निपेततुः शरीरेऽस्य पिता चैनमुवाच ह ॥ २९ ॥
नाभिवादयसे माद्य न च मामभिभाषसे । किं च शेषे तु भूमौ त्वं वत्स किं कुपितो ह्यसि ॥ ३० ॥
नन्वहं तेऽप्रियः पुत्र मातरं पश्य धार्मिकीम् । किं च नालिङ्गसे पुत्र सुकुमार वचो वद ॥ ३१ ॥
कस्य वा पररात्रेऽहं श्रोष्यामि हृदयंगमम् । अधीयानस्य मधुरं शास्त्रं वान्यद् विशेषतः ॥ ३२ ॥
को मां संध्यामुपास्यैव स्नात्वा हुतहुताशनः । श्लाघयिष्यत्युपासीनः पुत्रशोकभयार्दितम् ॥ ३३ ॥
कन्दमूलफलं हृत्वा यो मां प्रियमिवातिथिम् । भोजयिष्यत्यकर्मण्यमप्रग्रहमनायकम् ॥ ३४ ॥
इमामन्धां च वृद्धां च मातरं ते तपस्विनीम् । कथं पुत्र भरिष्यामि कृपणां पुत्रगर्धिनीम् ॥ ३५ ॥

"I took the sore afflicted couple to that spot single-handed, and I immediately made that sage with his wife touch his son. (28) Approaching that son of theirs and touching him, the two ascetics fell on his person and the father addressed him (as follows): so the tradition goes:—(29) 'You do not greet me today (as you used to do before) nor do you speak to me. Moreover, why are you actually lying on the ground, my darling ? Are you really displeased (with me) ? (30) If I am unwelcome to you, my son, look at your pious mother. Moreover, why do you not embrace her, my tender son ? (Pray) address (loving) words to me. (31) Whose heart-captivating voice shall I hear now in the latter half of the night, reading in particularly sweet tones from any scripture or other sacred book ? (32) Who, having bathed, worshipped Sandhyā (the goddess presiding over the morning twilight) and offered oblations to the sacred fire, and seated by my side, will console me, tormented with grief and fear caused by the death of my son ? (33) Who, having fetched bulbs, roots and fruits, will feed me as one would entertain a beloved guest, unfit as I am for work, resourceless and guideless ? (34) How, my son, shall I (be able to) support this mother of yours, who is not only blind, aged and given to austerities but also miserable and full of longing for her son ? (35)

तिष्ठ मा मा गमः पुत्र यमस्य सदनं प्रति । श्वो मया सह गन्तासि जनन्या च समेधितः ॥ ३६ ॥
उभावपि च शोकार्तावनाथौ कृपणौ वने । क्षिप्रमेव गमिष्यावस्त्वया हीनौ यमक्षयम् ॥ ३७ ॥
ततो वैवस्वतं दृष्ट्वा तं प्रवक्ष्यामि भारतीम् । क्षमतां धर्मराजो मे बिभृयात् पितरावयम् ॥ ३८ ॥
दातुमर्हति धर्मात्मा लोकपालो महायशाः । ईदृशस्य ममाक्षय्यामेकामभयदक्षिणाम् ॥ ३९ ॥
अपापोऽसि यथा पुत्र निहतः पापकर्मणा । तेन सत्येन गच्छाशु ये लोकास्त्वस्त्रयोधिनाम् ॥ ४० ॥
यां हि शूरा गतिं यान्ति संग्रामेष्वनिवर्तिनः । हतास्त्वभिमुखाः पुत्र गतिं तां परमां व्रज ॥ ४१ ॥
यां गतिं सगरः शैब्यो दिलीपो जनमेजयः । नहुषो धुन्धुमारश्च प्राप्तास्तां गच्छ पुत्रक ॥ ४२ ॥
या गतिः सर्वभूतानां स्वाध्यायात् तपसश्च या । भूमिदस्याहिताग्नेश्च एकपत्नीव्रतस्य च ॥ ४३ ॥
गोसहस्रप्रदातॄणां गुरुसेवाभृतामपि । देहन्यासकृतां या च तां गतिं गच्छ पुत्रक ॥ ४४ ॥
नहि त्वस्मिन् कुले जातो गच्छत्यकुशलां गतिम् । स तु यास्यति येन त्वं निहतो मम बान्धवः ॥ ४५ ॥

'Tarry, my son, (pray) do not, O do not (yet) proceed to the abode of Yama (the god of death). Tomorrow you will go with me and accompanied by your mother (too). (36) Stricken with grief, devoid of a supporter and leading a wretched

life in the forest, we shall both proceed to Yama's abode without delay, bereft as we are of you. (37) Seeing Yama (son of Vivaswān, the sun-god) I shall then address the (following) prayer to him: 'May King Dharma (the god of piety) be pleased to condone my fault. Let this son (of mine) continue to support us, his parents (as heretofore). (38) A pious-minded and highly illustrious guardian of the world, you ought to vouchsafe in my favour this one imperishable boon and make me fearless (for ever), reduced (as I am) to this plight. (39) Though killed as a result of some sinful act (committed in some previous existence), you are (really) sinless. Therefore, endowed as you are with truthfulness, speedily ascend, my son, to the realms which are attained by those who die fighting with weapons. (40) Reach, my son, that highest destiny to which actually attain heroic warriors never retreating from the fields of battle and killed while facing the enemy. (41) Reach, my dear child, the same goal to which attained Emperors Sagara, Śaibya, Dilīpa, Janamejaya, Nahuṣa and Dhundhumāra. (42) Get merged, my dear son, in the same Brahma which is the goal of all living beings, attainable through study of the Vedas and asceticism, and attain that destiny which is reserved for a donor of land, for him who has maintained the sacred fire (all his life), who has taken a vow of marrying a single wife, those who have gifted a thousand cows, those who are vowed to the service of their preceptor or who have dropped their body (by journeying to the Himalayas or drowning themselves in water or leaping into the flames). (43-44) In fact no one born in this race (of ascetics) can ever meet with an evil destiny (after death). He alone by whom you, my son, have been killed will meet with such a destiny.' (45)

एवं स कृपणं तत्र पर्यदेवयतासकृत् । तथोक्त्वा कर्तुमुदकं प्रवृत्तः सह भार्यया ॥ ४६ ॥
स तु दिव्येन रूपेण मुनिपुत्रः स्वकर्मभिः । स्वर्गमध्यारुहत् क्षिप्रं शक्रेण सह धर्मवित् ॥ ४७ ॥
आबभाषे च तौ वृद्धौ शक्रेण सह तापसः । आश्वस्य च मुहूर्तं तु पितरं वाक्यमब्रवीत् ॥ ४८ ॥
स्थानमस्मि महत् प्राप्तो भवतोः परिचारणात् । भवन्तावपि च क्षिप्रं मम मूलमुपैष्यथः ॥ ४९ ॥
एवमुक्त्वा तु दिव्येन विमानेन वपुष्मता । आरुरोह दिवं क्षिप्रं मुनिपुत्रो जितेन्द्रियः ॥ ५० ॥
स कृत्वाथोदकं तूर्णं तापसः सह भार्यया । मामुवाच महातेजाः कृताञ्जलिमुपस्थितम् ॥ ५१ ॥
अद्यैव जहि मां राजन् मरणे नास्ति मे व्यथा । यः शरेणैकपुत्रं मां त्वमकार्षीरपुत्रकम् ॥ ५२ ॥
त्वयापि च यदज्ञानान्निहतो मे स बालकः । तेन त्वामपि शप्स्येऽहं सुदुःखमतिदारुणम् ॥ ५३ ॥
पुत्रव्यसनजं दुःखं यदेतन्मम साम्प्रतम् । एवं त्वं पुत्रशोकेन राजन् कालं करिष्यसि ॥ ५४ ॥
अज्ञानात्तु हतो यस्मात् क्षत्रियेण त्वया मुनिः । तस्मात् त्वां नाविशत्याशु ब्रह्महत्या नराधिप ॥ ५५ ॥
त्वामप्येतादृशो भावः क्षिप्रमेव गमिष्यति । जीवितान्तकरो घोरो दातारमिव दक्षिणाम् ॥ ५६ ॥

"The ascetic piteously wailed again and again as aforesaid on that spot. Saying so he proceeded with his wife to offer libations of water (to the spirit of his departed son). (46) By virtue of his own (virtuous) deeds, that sage's son, for his part, who knew what is right, immediately ascended in an ethereal form to heaven in the company of Indra (who had evidently come in person drawn by the exceptional merits of the hermit in order to escort him). (47) Nay, the ascetic for his part along with Indra talked with the aged couple and, comforting them awhile, spoke to his father as follows:—(48) 'Through service rendered to you both I have attained an exalted place. You two as well will soon reach my presence.' (49) Hav-

ing spoken as aforesaid the sage's son, for his part, who had subdued his senses, quickly rose to heaven in a shapely aerial car of heavenly design. (50) Having quickly offered libations of water with his wife, the exceptionally glorious ascetic spoke (as follows) to me, who stood near him with joined palms:—(51) 'Since with one arrow you have rendered me sonless,—me, who had only one son, (pray) kill me (as well) this very day, O king; no agony will be experienced by me in dying. (52) Again, since that boy of mine has been killed by you through ignorance, I shall accordingly pronounce a most painful and very severe curse on you too. (53) As this agony caused by the death of my son is being experienced by me at this moment (through you), you (too) will likewise meet your end through grief born of separation from your son. (54) Since, however, an ascetic has been killed by you, a Kṣatriya, through ignorance, the sin of killing a Brahman is not going to visit you forthwith (as may be expected by you), O ruler of men ! (55) A similar situation that will not only be dreadful but will prove fatal to you will soon confront you (even) as merit accrues to the giver of a donation to the priest.' (56)

एवं शापं मयि न्यस्य विलप्य करुणं बहु । चितामारोप्य देहं तन्मिथुनं स्वर्गमभ्ययात् ॥ ५७ ॥
तदेतच्चिन्तयानेन स्मृतं पापं मया स्वयम् । तदा बाल्यात् कृतं देवि शब्दवेध्यनुकर्षिणा ॥ ५८ ॥
तस्यायं कर्मणो देवि विपाकः समुपस्थितः । अपथ्यैः सह सम्भुङ्क्ते व्याधिरन्नरसे यथा ॥ ५९ ॥
तस्मान्मामागतं भद्रे तस्योदारस्य तद् वचः । इत्युक्त्वा स रुदंस्त्रस्तो भार्यामाह तु भूमिपः ॥ ६० ॥
यदहं पुत्रशोकेन संत्यजिष्यामि जीवितम् । चक्षुर्भ्यां त्वां न पश्यामि कौसल्ये त्वं हि मां स्पृश ॥ ६१ ॥
यमक्षयमनुप्राप्ता द्रक्ष्यन्ति नहि मानवाः । यदि मां संस्पृशेद् रामः सकृदन्वारभेत वा ॥ ६२ ॥
धनं वा यौवराज्यं वा जीवेयमिति मे मतिः । न तन्मे सदृशं देवि यन्मया राघवे कृतम् ॥ ६३ ॥
सदृशं तत्तु तस्यैव यदनेन कृतं मयि । दुर्वृत्तमपि कः पुत्रं त्यजेद् भुवि विचक्षणः ॥ ६४ ॥
कश्च प्रव्राज्यमानो वा नासूयेत् पितरं सुतः । चक्षुषा त्वां न पश्यामि स्मृतिर्मम विलुप्यते ॥ ६५ ॥
दूता वैवस्वतस्यैते कौसल्ये त्वरयन्ति माम् । अतस्तु किं दुःखतरं यदहं जीवितक्षये ॥ ६६ ॥
नहि पश्यामि धर्मज्ञं रामं सत्यपराक्रमम् ।

"Having pronounced this execration on me and piteously wailing a lot, and throwing their body into the funeral pile the aforesaid couple rose to heaven. (57) The sin committed by me on that occasion through folly by (first discharging and then) extracting an arrow capable of hitting an invisible mark with the help of its sound was automatically recalled by me while brooding over the present predicament, O godly lady ! (58) The (bitter) fruit of that (sinful) deed, O queen ! has now come upon me (even) as illness follows (as a matter of course) in the wake of nutriment taken with zest along with unwholesome (seasoned) articles. (59) Therefore the fruit of the aforesaid imprecation of that great sage has come to me, O blessed lady !" Saying so, the said emperor spoke weeping (again) to his wife (Kausalyā), frightened as he was (at the approach of death in the absence of Śrī Rāma):—(60) "Since I am (soon) going to yield up the ghost out of grief born of separation from my son (Śrī Rāma), I no longer perceive you with my eyes, O Kausalyā ! Therefore touch you me (to convince me of your presence by my side); for men who have reached the threshold of the abode of Yama (the god of death) no longer discern anyone. Should Rāma touch me (only) once or regain my wealth or the office of Prince Regent I might yet survive; such is my

belief. The wrong which has been done by me to Rāma (a scion of Raghu) is not becoming of me, O pious lady; while the obligation which has been done by him to me (by redeeming my promise and waiving his rightful claim to the throne of Ayodhya) is worthy of him alone. What wise man on earth would forsake a son even of bad morals ? And what son when being sent into exile (by his father) would not find fault with his father ? I can no longer see you with my eyes (and) my memory (too) is fading. (Nay) these messengers of Yama (son of Vivaswān, the sun-god), are urging me to make haste, O Kausalyā ! Really speaking, what can be more painful than the fact that (even) at the end of my life I cannot behold Rāma of unfailing prowess, who knows what is right !

तस्यादर्शनजः शोकः सुतस्याप्रतिकर्मणः ॥ ६७ ॥
उच्छोषयति वै प्राणान् वारि स्तोकमिवातपः । न ते मनुष्या देवास्ते ये चारुशुभकुण्डलम् ॥ ६८ ॥
मुखं द्रक्ष्यन्ति रामस्य वर्षे पञ्चदशे पुनः । पद्मपत्रेक्षणं सुभ्रु सुदंष्ट्रं चारुनासिकम् ॥ ६९ ॥
धन्या द्रक्ष्यन्ति रामस्य ताराधिपसमं मुखम् । सदृशं शारदस्येन्दोः फुल्लस्य कमलस्य च ॥ ७० ॥
सुगन्धि मम रामस्य धन्या द्रक्ष्यन्ति ये मुखम् । निवृत्तवनवासं तमयोध्यां पुनरागतम् ॥ ७१ ॥
द्रक्ष्यन्ति सुखिनो रामं शुक्रं मार्गगतं यथा । कौसल्ये चित्तमोहेन हृदयं सीदतेतराम् ॥ ७२ ॥
वेदये न च संयुक्ताञ्शब्दस्पर्शरसानहम् ।
चित्तनाशाद् विपद्यन्ते सर्वाण्येवेन्द्रियाणि हि । क्षीणस्नेहस्य दीपस्य संरक्ता रश्मयो यथा ॥ ७३ ॥
अयमात्मभवः शोको मामनाथमचेतनम् । संसाधयति वेगेन यथा कूलं नदीरयः ॥ ७४ ॥
हा राघव महाबाहो हा ममायासनाशन । हा पितृप्रिय मे नाथ हा ममासि गतः सुत ॥ ७५ ॥
हा कौसल्ये न पश्यामि हा सुमित्रे तपस्विनि । हा नृशंसे ममामित्रे कैकेयि कुलपांसनि ॥ ७६ ॥

"The grief born of my not being able to see my son of incomparable deeds is really drying up my vitality (even) as sunshine dries up meagre water. They who will (be able to) behold again in the fifteenth year Rāma's face with lovely and beautiful ear-rings are not men but gods. Lucky men (alone) will look on the moon-like countenance of Rāma with eyes resembling lotus petals, shapely eye-brows, lovely teeth and a charming nose Blessed are they who will see the sweet-smelling face of my Rāma, resembling the autumnal moon and a (full-) blown lotus. The happy (alone) will behold the celebrated Rāma returned to Ayodhya on his term of exile having expired, even as people see (with delight) the planet Venus reverted to its (usual) course. Due to obtuseness of mind, O Kausalyā, my heart is sinking, and I have no sensation of sound, touch and taste even when these objects of senses are brought into contact with my senses, for all the senses are obscured as a result of the failure of the mind (even) as the exceedingly luminous rays of a light whose oil has been consumed disappear. (61—73) This grief, which has emanated from my own self, is rendering me helpless and unconscious by its vehemence in the same way as the current of a river wears away its own bank by its rapid motion. (74) Ah mighty-armed scion of Raghu, O reliever of my suffering, O darling of your father, ah my protector, Ah my son, are you (really) gone (out of sight) ? (75) Ah Kausalyā, I can no longer see (with my eyes). Ah Sumitrā, given to austerities ! Oh cruel Kaikeyi, my (sworn) enemy, the disgrace of my family !" (76)

इति मातुश्च रामस्य सुमित्रायाश्च संनिधौ । राजा दशरथः शोचञ्जीवितान्तमुपागमत् ॥ ७७ ॥
तथा तु दीनः कथयन् नराधिपः प्रियस्य पुत्रस्य विवासनातुरः ।
गतेऽर्धरात्रे भृशदुःखपीडितस्तदा जहौ प्राणमुदारदर्शनः ॥ ७८ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे चतुःषष्टितमः सर्गः ॥ ६४ ॥

Lamenting thus in the presence of Śrī Rāma's mother (Kausalyā) and Sumitrā, King Daśaratha reached the end of his life (77) Speaking as aforesaid, the king of noble aspect, who was already feeling miserable and distressed on the score of his beloved son's exile, felt sore stricken with agony by the time half the night passed and forthwith gave up the ghost. (78)

Thus ends Canto Sixty-four in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

पञ्चषष्टितमः सर्गः

Canto LXV

When the emperor did not wake up even though roused by means of panegyrics sung by bards, accompanied by musical instruments played upon for the same purpose, the ladies of the gynaeceum conclude by other means that the king is dead; and soon after commences the loud wail of Kausalyā, Sumitrā and other queens.

अथ राज्या व्यतीतायां प्रातरेवापरेऽहनि । वन्दिनः पर्युपातिष्ठंस्तत्पार्थिवनिवेशनम् ॥ १ ॥
सूताः परमसंस्कारा मागधाश्चोत्तमश्रुताः । गायकाः श्रुतिशीलाश्च निगदन्तः पृथक्पृथक् ॥ २ ॥
राजानं स्तुवतां तेषामुदात्ताभिहिताशिषाम् । प्रासादाभोगविस्तीर्णः स्तुतिशब्दो ह्यवर्तत ॥ ३ ॥
ततस्तु स्तुवतां तेषां सूतानां पाणिवादकाः । अपदानान्युदाहृत्य पाणिवादान्यवादयन् ॥ ४ ॥
तेन शब्देन विहगाः प्रतिबुद्धाश्च सस्वनुः । शाखास्थाः पञ्जरस्थाश्च ये राजकुलगोचराः ॥ ५ ॥
व्याहृताः पुण्यशब्दाश्च वीणानां चापि निःस्वनाः । आशीर्गेयं च गाथानां पूरयामास वेश्म तत् ॥ ६ ॥

When the night had ended, there arrived forthwith at the residence of the aforesaid emperor early next morning panegyrists, highly cultured minstrels and bards whose information (about genealogical tables etc.) was of a superior kind, as well as singers capable of distinguishing the difference in the tones of a Vina etc. and singing according to their different styles. (1-2) The sound of the praises uttered by the aforesaid bards and others, who were glorifying the king and by whom benedictions were pronounced in a loud voice, actually pervaded the interior of the palaces (in the form of echo). (3) While the aforesaid minstrels for their part were (engaged in) uttering praises, those who sang with the clapping of hands thereupon clapped their hands recounting the marvellous feats of the rulers of Ayodhya. (4) Nay, roused by that sound (of clapping), birds appearing in the royal palace and perched on the boughs of trees as well as confined in a cage uttered forth their notes. (5) The holy words uttered (by the Brahmans and parrots etc.) as well as

the notes of Vina and the benedictory portion, set to music, of epic verses (composed by Brahmans in praise of the king) filled that palace. (6)

ततः शुचिसमाचाराः पर्युपस्थानकोविदाः । स्त्रीवर्षवरभूयिष्ठा उपतस्थुर्यथा पुरा ॥ ७ ॥
हरिचन्दनसम्पृक्तमुदकं काञ्चनैर्घटैः । आनिन्युः स्नानशिक्षाज्ञा यथाकालं यथाविधि ॥ ८ ॥
मङ्गलालम्भनीयानि प्राशनीयान्युपस्करान् । उपानिन्युस्तथा पुण्याः कुमारीबहुलाः स्त्रियः ॥ ९ ॥
सर्वलक्षणसम्पन्नं सर्वं विधिवदर्चितम् । सर्वं सुगुणलक्ष्मीवत् तदभूदाभिहारिकम् ॥ १० ॥
ततः सूर्योदयं यावत् सर्वं परिसमुत्सुकम् । तस्थावनुपसम्प्राप्तं किंस्विदित्युपशङ्कितम् ॥ ११ ॥

Then attendants, mostly consisting of women and eunuchs, of unimpeachable conduct and proficient in service, stood ready to serve as usual. (7) Servants who knew how to conduct the bath (of emperors) brought at the appropriate hour and in the prescribed manner water scented with sandal paste in pitchers of gold. (8) Virtuous women, largely consisting of virgins (whose very sight is believed to be propitious), likewise brought cows etc. (whose very touch is considered to be auspicious), articles worth sipping the first thing (*viz*, the water of the holy Ganga, water in which the feet of a deity have been washed and so on) and articles of dress, toilet etc. (9) All that was worth bringing (within the sight of the emperor at the time of his waking for his good luck) and was endowed with all auspicious characteristics and all that was praiseworthy, of excellent quality and possessed of charm was kept (ready) in accordance with the scriptural ordinance. (10) Till sunrise all the king's retinue stood immensely eager (to see the king) and apprehensive as to what (mishap) had befallen the king, who had not yet come out (of the gynaeceum). (11)

अथ याः कोसलेन्द्रस्य शयनं प्रत्यनन्तराः । ताः स्त्रियस्तु समागम्य भर्तारं प्रत्यबोधयन् ॥ १२ ॥
अथाप्युचितवृत्तास्ता विनयेन नयेन च । नह्यस्य शयनं स्पृष्ट्वा किंचिदप्युपलेभिरे ॥ १३ ॥
ताः स्त्रियः स्वप्नशीलज्ञाश्चेष्टां संचलनादिषु । ता वेपथुपरीताश्च राज्ञः प्राणेषु शङ्किताः ॥ १४ ॥
प्रतिस्रोतस्तृणाग्राणां सदृशं संचकाशिरे ।
अथ संदेहमानानां स्त्रीणां दृष्ट्वा च पार्थिवम् । यत् तदाशङ्कितं पापं तदा जज्ञे विनिश्चयः ॥ १५ ॥
कौसल्या च सुमित्रा च पुत्रशोकपराजिते । प्रसुप्ते न प्रबुध्येते यथा कालसमन्विते ॥ १६ ॥
निष्प्रभासा विवर्णा च सन्ना शोकेन संनता । न व्यराजत कौसल्या तारेव तिमिरावृता ॥ १७ ॥
कौसल्यानन्तरं राज्ञः सुमित्रा तदनन्तरम् । न स्म विभ्राजते देवी शोकाश्रुलुलितानना ॥ १८ ॥

Now approaching their consort, those ladies (other than Kausalyā and the other principal queens), for their part, who were close to the couch of the king of Kosala, began to rouse him (by calling him in gentle and polite words and touching his person). (12) Nevertheless, on touching his couch with reverence and skill, the ladies, whose behaviour (on the occasion) was (perfectly) justifiable, could not detect any sign of life whatsoever (in him). (13) Those ladies, who knew the condition of a body in slumber, did not discover any throbbing in the heart, the pulse and other organs. They were (accordingly) seized with tremor, apprehensive as they were about the king's life, and looked (unsteady) like the ends of reeds standing against a stream. Now on seeing (the condition of) the emperor at that time a certainty rose in the mind of the doubting ladies about

the disaster (in the form of death) which was apprehended. (14-15) Being fast asleep, Kausalyā and Sumitrā too, who had been prostrated with grief caused by separation from their sons, would not wake up as though they had been overtaken by death. (16) Shorn of splendour and divested of her (native) colour, (nay) stricken and laid prostrate with grief, Kausalyā did not shine brightly (as before) any more than a star engulfed in darkness. (17) Lying (asleep) close to the king (who was now dead and therefore pale) Kausalyā too did not shine brightly (any more than the king) nor did Queen Sumitrā, who lay asleep next to Kausalyā, and whose face was bathed in tears of grief. (18)

ते च दृष्ट्वा तदा सुप्ते उभे देव्यौ च तं नृपम् । सुप्तमेवोद्गतप्राणमन्तःपुरममन्यत ॥ १९ ॥
ततः प्रचुक्रुशुर्दीनाः सस्वरं ता वराङ्गनाः । करेणव इवारण्ये स्थानप्रच्युतयूथपाः ॥ २० ॥
तासामाक्रन्दशब्देन सहसोद्गतचेतने । कौसल्या च सुमित्रा च त्यक्तनिद्रे बभूवतुः ॥ २१ ॥
कौसल्या च सुमित्रा च दृष्ट्वा स्पृष्ट्वा च पार्थिवम् । हा नाथेति परिक्रुश्य पेततुर्धरणीतले ॥ २२ ॥
सा कोसलेन्द्रदुहिता चेष्टमाना महीतले । न भ्राजते रजोध्वस्ता तारेव गगनच्युता ॥ २३ ॥

Seeing both the aforesaid queens (Kausalyā and Sumitrā), asleep at that time, (the inmates of) the gynaeceum concluded that King Daśaratha had breathed his last while asleep. (19) Then those pretty women loudly wailed, afflicted as they were, like female elephants in a forest, the leader of whose herd had strayed away from their abode. (20) Roused all of a sudden by the noise of their wailing, Kausalyā and Sumitrā too shook off their slumber. (21) Looking at the emperor and touching him and crying loudly "Ah my lord!" Kausalyā and Sumitrā too dropped to the ground. (22) Tossing on the floor and covered with dust, that daughter of the ruler of Kosala (a principality of that name to the south of the kingdom of Kosala and later merged in it) did not look charming any more than a (shooting) star fallen from the heavens. (23)

नृपे शान्तगुणे जाते कौसल्यां पतितां भुवि । अपश्यंस्ताः स्त्रियः सर्वा हतां नागवधूमिव ॥ २४ ॥
ततः सर्वा नरेन्द्रस्य कैकेयीप्रमुखाः स्त्रियः । रुदत्यः शोकसंतप्ता निपेतुर्गतचेतनाः ॥ २५ ॥
ताभिः स बलवान् नादः क्रोशन्तीभिरनुद्रुतः । येन स्फीतीकृतो भूयस्तद् गृहं समनादयत् ॥ २६ ॥
तत् परित्रस्तसम्भ्रान्तपर्युत्सुकजनाकुलम् । सर्वतस्तुमुलाक्रन्दं परितापार्तबान्धवम् ॥ २७ ॥
सद्योनिपतितानन्दं दीनं विक्लवदर्शनम् । बभूव नरदेवस्य सद्म दिष्टान्तमीयुषः ॥ २८ ॥
अतीतमाज्ञाय तु पार्थिवर्षभं यशस्विनं तं परिवार्य पत्नयः ।
भृशं रुदत्यः करुणं सुदुःखिताः प्रगृह्य बाहू व्यलपन्ननाथवत् ॥ २९ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे पञ्चषष्टितमः सर्गः ॥ ६५ ॥

The king having expired, all those ladies beheld Kausalyā fallen on the ground like the dead wife of a Nāga (a semi-divine being credited with a human face with serpent-like lower extremities). (24) Then the king's wives, Kaikeyī and others, who were all weeping, sore stricken with grief as they were, fell down, consciousness having departed (from them). (25) That powerful noise (already heard in the gynaeceum) was supplemented by those wailing ladies (by means of their own lamentation), swollen by which it rendered the house all the more noisy. (26) That gynaeceum of the king,

who had (now) met his appointed end, was thronged with men and women who felt greatly alarmed, flurried and over-excited, was filled with a tumultuous wail on all sides and crowded with (the king's) relations who were stricken with deep agony. Joy had suddenly disappeared from it and it wore a miserable aspect and presented a perplexed appearance. (27-28) Concluding the illustrious Daśaratha (the foremost of kings) to be deceased and surrounding him on all sides, his consorts, for their part, who were profusely shedding tears, greatly afflicted as they were, piteously wailed like helpless women, clasping his arms. (29)

Thus ends Canto Sixty-five in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

षट्षष्टितमः सर्गः

Canto LXVI

Resting the head of the lifeless monarch in her own lap and severely reproaching Kaikeyī, Kausalyā grievously mourns for Śrī Rāma and other exiles. Holding back Kausalyā,—who was lamenting with her arms placed round her deceased husband's bosom,—and consigning the emperor's dead body to a trough filled with oil, the ministers and other functionaries return each to his own abode in the evening.

तमग्निमिव संशान्तमम्बुहीनमिवार्णवम् । गतप्रभमिवादित्यं स्वर्गस्थं प्रेक्ष्य भूमिपम् ॥ १ ॥
कौसल्या बाष्पपूर्णाक्षी विविधं शोककर्शिता । उपगृह्य शिरो राज्ञः कैकेयीं प्रत्यभाषत ॥ २ ॥
सकामा भव कैकेयि भुङ्क्ष्व राज्यमकण्टकम् । त्यक्त्वा राजानमेकाग्रा नृशंसे दुष्टचारिणि ॥ ३ ॥
विहाय मां गतो रामो भर्ता च स्वर्गतो मम । विपथे सार्थहीनेव नाहं जीवितुमुत्सहे ॥ ४ ॥
भर्तारं तु परित्यज्य का स्त्री दैवतमात्मनः । इच्छेज्जीवितुमन्यत्र कैकेय्यास्त्यक्तधर्मणः ॥ ५ ॥
न लुब्धो बुध्यते दोषान् किम्पाकमिव भक्षयन् । कुब्जानिमित्तं कैकेय्या राघवाणां कुलं हतम् ॥ ६ ॥

Beholding the aforesaid emperor, whose spirit was (now) in heaven, and who looked like a fully extinguished fire, a waterless ocean and a lustreless sun, and clasping the king's head, Kausalyā, who was stricken with grief in diverse ways, spoke (as follows) to Kaikeyī, her eyes full of tears:—(1-2) "(Having your desire fulfilled), O cruel Kaikeyī, be satisfied. Having done with the king, O woman of evil conduct, confidently enjoy the throne, which has no more enemies. (3) Forsaking me, Rāma has departed (for the forest), while my husband has ascended to heaven. (As such) I cannot live any longer than a woman bereft of her companions on a perilous road. (4) Truly speaking, what woman, other than Kaikeyī, who has cast (all) piety to the winds, would survive leaving her husband, a (veritable) god to her? (5) A greedy man does not cognize his own faults any more than he who partakes of a forbidden dish. The race of the Raghus has been destroyed by Kaikeyī at the instigation of Mantharā (a hunch-backed woman). (6)

अनियोगे नियुक्तेन राज्ञा रामं विवासितम् । सभार्यं जनकः श्रुत्वा परितप्स्यत्यहं यथा ॥ ७ ॥
स मामनाथां विधवां नाद्य जानाति धार्मिकः । रामः कमलपत्राक्षो जीवन्नाशमितो गतः ॥ ८ ॥
विदेहराजस्य सुता तथा चारुतपस्विनी । दुःखस्यानुचिता दुःखं वने पर्युद्विजिष्यति ॥ ९ ॥
नदतां भीमघोषाणां निशासु मृगपक्षिणाम् । निशम्य नादं संत्रस्ता राघवं संश्रयिष्यति ॥ १० ॥
वृद्धश्चैवाल्पपुत्रश्च वैदेहीमनुचिन्तयन् । सोऽपि शोकसमाविष्टो नूनं त्यक्ष्यति जीवितम् ॥ ११ ॥
साहमद्यैव दिष्टान्तं गमिष्यामि पतिव्रता । इदं शरीरमालिङ्ग्य प्रवेक्ष्यामि हुताशनम् ॥ १२ ॥

"Hearing of Rāma having been exiled with his consort (Sītā) by the king as urged (by Kaikeyī) to an unbecoming act, King Janaka (too) will feel greatly perturbed as I do. (7) That pious Rāma, who is possessed of eyes resembling lotus petals and who has disappeared from this place even though living, does not know me to have been deprived of my master and husband today. (8) The daughter of Janaka (the ruler of the Videha territory), who is engaged in agreeable austerities (in the shape of service to her exiled husband living in a forest) and is undeserving of suffering, will feel sorely afflicted in the forest. (9) Greatly alarmed to hear during the nights the noise of howling (wild) beasts and birds possessing the habit of uttering a fearful cry, she will cling (in terror) to Rāma (a scion of Raghu). (10) Anxiously thinking again and again of Sītā (a princess of the Videha territory), and overwhelmed with grief, Janaka too, who is aged and who has few issues (*viz*, a daughter named Urmilā, wife of Lakṣmaṇa and a god-daughter in the person of Sītā), will surely give up the ghost. (11) I (too), devoted as I am to my husband, shall accordingly meet my destined end this very day. (Nay) embracing this body (of my husband), I shall enter the fire (that will be prepared for his funeral)." (12)

तां ततः सम्परिष्वज्य विलपन्तीं तपस्विनीम् । व्यपनिन्युः सुदुःखार्तां कौसल्यां व्यावहारिकाः ॥ १३ ॥
तैलद्रोण्यां तदाऽऽमात्याः संवेश्य जगतीपतिम् । राज्ञः सर्वाण्यथादिष्टाश्चक्रुः कर्माण्यनन्तरम् ॥ १४ ॥
न तु संकालनं राज्ञो विना पुत्रेण मन्त्रिणः । सर्वज्ञाः कर्तुमीषुस्ते ततो रक्षन्ति भूमिपम् ॥ १५ ॥
तैलद्रोण्यां शायितं तं सचिवैस्तु नराधिपम् । हा मृतोऽयमिति ज्ञात्वा स्त्रियस्ताः पर्यदेवयन् ॥ १६ ॥
बाहूनुच्छ्रित्य कृपणा नेत्रप्रस्रवणैर्मुखैः । रुदत्यः शोकसंतप्ताः कृपणं पर्यदेवयन् ॥ १७ ॥

The ministers (*lit.*, functionaries entrusted with the work of disposing of the king's dead body) then reverently removed (from that place) the wretched Kausalyā, who was sore stricken with agony and lamented holding the (dead) monarch in close embrace. (13) Consigning the (deceased) emperor at that time to a trough filled with oil, the ministers as commanded (by Vasiṣṭha and other family priests) then performed all the duties (connected with the preservation of the king's dead body etc.) required to be done next. (14) Knowing (as they did) everything (connected with the disposal of the dead body), the aforesaid counsellors would not of course perform the king's funeral without (the presence of) a son; hence they preserved the body of the king. (15) Coming to know of the king having been laid by the ministers in the trough filled with oil, the aforesaid ladies lamented exclaiming as follows:—"Ah, the king is dead!" (16) Throwing up their arms, the wretched ladies, crying with their faces containing cascades in the form of eyes, sore stricken with grief (as they were), piteously wailed (as follows):—(17)

हा महाराज रामेण संततं प्रियवादिना । विहीनाः सत्यसंधेन किमर्थं विजहासि नः ॥ १८ ॥
कैकेय्या दुष्टभावाया राघवेण विवर्जिताः । कथं सपत्न्या वत्स्यामः समीपे विधवा वयम् ॥ १९ ॥
स हि नाथः स चास्माकं तव च प्रभुरात्मवान् । वनं रामो गतः श्रीमान् विहाय नृपतिश्रियम् ॥ २० ॥
त्वया तेन च वीरेण विना व्यसनमोहिताः । कथं वयं निवत्स्यामः कैकेय्या च विदूषिताः ॥ २१ ॥
यया च राजा रामश्च लक्ष्मणश्च महाबलः । सीतया सह संत्यक्ताः सा कमन्यं न हास्यति ॥ २२ ॥

"Ah, wherefore, O emperor, do you abandon us, (already) bereft of Rāma of unfailing promise, who ever speaks kindly (to all) ? (18) Forsaken by Rāma and deprived of our husband, how shall we live in proximity to our co-wife, Kaikeyī, of wicked intention ? (19) That glorious Rāma was indeed our protector and lord as well as of yours, self-controlled as he is. Having relinquished the royal fortune, he has departed for the forest. (20) Nonplussed through adversity and treated disrespectfully by Kaikeyī, how shall we live without you and that heroic prince ? (21) Whom else will she,—by whom have been abandoned the king as well as Rāma and the very mighty Lakṣmaṇa with Sītā,—not abandon ?" (22)

ता बाष्पेण च संवीताः शोकेन विपुलेन च । व्यचेष्टन्त निरानन्दा राघवस्य वरस्त्रियः ॥ २३ ॥
निशा नक्षत्रहीनेव स्त्रीव भर्तृविवर्जिता । पुरी नाराजतायोध्या हीना राज्ञा महात्मना ॥ २४ ॥
बाष्पपर्याकुलजना हाहाभूतकुलाङ्गना । शून्यचत्वरवेश्मान्ता न बभ्राज यथापुरम् ॥ २५ ॥
गते तु शोकात् त्रिदिवं नराधिपे महीतलस्थासु नृपाङ्गनासु च ।
निवृत्तचारः सहसा गतो रविः प्रवृत्तचारा रजनी ह्युपस्थिता ॥ २६ ॥
ऋते तु पुत्राद् दहनं महीपतेर्नारोचयंस्ते सुहृदः समागताः ।
इतीव तस्मिञ्शयने न्यवेशयन् विचिन्त्य राजानमचिन्त्यदर्शनम् ॥ २७ ॥
गतप्रभा द्यौरिव भास्करं विना व्यपेतनक्षत्रगणेव शर्वरी ।
पुरी बभासे रहिता महात्मना कण्ठास्रकण्ठाकुलमार्गचत्वरा ॥ २८ ॥
नराश्च नार्यश्च समेत्य संघशो विगर्हमाणा भरतस्य मातरम् ।
तदा नगर्यां नरदेवसंक्षये बभूवुरार्ता न च शर्म लेभिरे ॥ २९ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे षट्षष्टितमः सर्गः ॥ ६६ ॥

Bathed in tears and seized with enormous grief, those charming consorts of Daśaratha (a scion of Raghu) tossed about (on the ground), divested of joy as they were. (23) Bereft of its high-souled ruler (King Daśaratha), the city of Ayodhya did not shine any more than a night without stars or a woman deprived of her husband. (24) With its men bathed in tears and women of high pedigree raising a cry of distress, and its cross-roads and entrances of houses looking desolate, the city did not look charming as before. (25) The king for his part having departed for heaven due to grief (caused by separation from his sons and daughter-in-law) and the king's consorts tossing on the floor, the sun suddenly disappeared (below the horizon), its rays having ceased to be diffused, and the night actually fell, darkness having commenced to spread. (26) Those friends and relations of the emperor that stood assembled (on the occasion) did not favour his cremation in the absence of a son. Therefore, considering the king as having assumed an appearance beyond conception, they laid the king in that trough (which served as his

bed). (27) Bereft of Daśaratha (an exalted soul), the city with its roads and cross-roads full of men whose throats were choked with tears that ran past their throats, looked like the firmament shorn of splendour in the absence of the sun and (further) resembled a night with its host of stars gone out of sight. (28) Coming together in batches and reproaching Bharata's mother, men and women in the city felt distressed at that time on the king's demise and found no rest. (29)

Thus ends Canto Sixty-six in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

सप्तषष्टितमः सर्गः

Canto LXVII

Attributing the rise and fall of a kingdom to the presence and disappearance of its ruler, Mārkaṇḍeya and other great sages, who attended the king's court the following day, urge Vasiṣṭha to install any of the princes on the throne immediately.

आक्रन्दिता निरानन्दा सास्रकण्ठजनाविला । अयोध्यायामवतता सा व्यतीयाय शर्वरी ॥ १ ॥
व्यतीतायां तु शर्वर्यामादित्यस्योदये ततः । समेत्य राजकर्तारः सभामीयुर्द्विजातयः ॥ २ ॥
मार्कण्डेयोऽथ मौद्गल्यो वामदेवश्च कश्यपः । कात्यायनो गौतमश्च जाबालिश्च महायशाः ॥ ३ ॥
एते द्विजाः सहामात्यैः पृथग्वाचमुदीरयन् । वसिष्ठमेवाभिमुखाः श्रेष्ठं राजपुरोहितम् ॥ ४ ॥
अतीता शर्वरी दुःखं या नो वर्षशतोपमा । अस्मिन् पञ्चत्वमापन्ने पुत्रशोकेन पार्थिवे ॥ ५ ॥
स्वर्गस्थश्च महाराजो रामश्चारण्यमाश्रितः । लक्ष्मणश्चापि तेजस्वी रामेणैव गतः सह ॥ ६ ॥
उभौ भरतशत्रुघ्नौ केकयेषु परंतपौ । पुरे राजगृहे रम्ये मातामहनिवेशने ॥ ७ ॥
इक्ष्वाकूणामिहाद्यैव कश्चिद् राजा विधीयताम् । अराजकं हि नो राष्ट्रं विनाशं समवाप्नुयात् ॥ ८ ॥

That night, which was full of laments and shorn of joy and (therefore) appeared long and was thronged with crowds of tearful men, in Ayodhya came to an end. (1) Coming together at sunrise, when the night had ended, Brahmans who carried on all the duties of a king (during the interregnum) arrived for their part at the court. (2) Seated with their faces turned towards Vasiṣṭha alone, the arch-priest of the royal family, Mārkaṇḍeya and Maudgalya, Vāmadeva and Kaśyapa, Kātyāyana and Gautama, as well as Jābāli, who enjoyed great fame, these Brahmans along with the ministers separately made speeches (the substance of which is given below:—) (3-4) "The yonder king having met his end due to grief born of separation from his sons (Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa), the night, which weighed upon us like a hundred years, has ended with difficulty. (5) Not only is the emperor away in heaven but Śrī Rāma too has taken up his abode in the forest. Nay, the powerful Lakṣmaṇa too has left with the same Śrī Rāma. (6) Both Bharata and Śatrughna, who are capable of chastising the enemy, are in the lovely palace of their maternal grandfather at his capital, Rājagṛha, in the Kekaya kingdom. (7) Someone among the sons of Daśaratha (who are scions of Ikṣwāku) should be crowned king this very day; for without a ruler our state (of Kosala) may meet with ruin. (8)

नाराजके जनपदे विद्युन्माली महास्वनः । अभिवर्षति पर्जन्यो महीं दिव्येन वारिणा ॥ ९ ॥
नाराजके जनपदे बीजमुष्टिः प्रकीर्यते । नाराजके पितुः पुत्रो भार्या वा वर्तते वशे ॥ १० ॥
अराजके धनं नास्ति नास्ति भार्याप्यराजके । इदमत्याहितं चान्यत् कुतः सत्यमराजके ॥ ११ ॥
नाराजके जनपदे कारयन्ति सभां नराः । उद्यानानि च रम्याणि हृष्टाः पुण्यगृहाणि च ॥ १२ ॥
नाराजके जनपदे यज्ञशीला द्विजातयः । सत्राण्यन्वासते दान्ता ब्राह्मणाः संशितव्रताः ॥ १३ ॥
नाराजके जनपदे महायज्ञेषु यज्वनः । ब्राह्मणा वसुसम्पूर्णा विसृजन्त्याप्तदक्षिणाः ॥ १४ ॥
नाराजके जनपदे प्रहृष्टनटनर्तकाः । उत्सवाश्च समाजाश्च वर्धन्ते राष्ट्रवर्धनाः ॥ १५ ॥
नाराजके जनपदे सिद्धार्था व्यवहारिणः । कथाभिरभिरज्यन्ते कथाशीलाः कथाप्रियैः ॥ १६ ॥
नाराजके जनपदे तूद्यानानि समागताः । सायाह्ने क्रीडितुं यान्ति कुमार्यो हेमभूषिताः ॥ १७ ॥
नाराजके जनपदे धनवन्तः सुरक्षिताः । शेरते विवृतद्वाराः कृषिगोरक्षजीविनः ॥ १८ ॥

"In a land destitute of a ruler the thundering cloud wreathed with lightning does not drench the earth with rain water. (9) In a rulerless land handfuls of seeds are no longer scattered (for fear of uncertainty of crops). (Nay) in a rulerless land a son is not amenable to the control of his father nor is a wife amenable to the control of her husband (there being no executive authority to enforce correct conduct). (10) In a rulerless land there is no personal property (in the absence of a protector) nor is there a (faithful) wife in a rulerless land (there being no law to check adultery). There is this great risk in a rulerless territory. How can any other form of truthfulness (virtue) prevail ? (11) In a rulerless land, people do not construct assembly halls (for public gatherings, there being no such gatherings) nor do joyous men plant lovely gardens (for fear of their being destroyed by enemies of peace and order) or build sacred houses (such as temples and buildings for the free accommodation of travellers and strangers etc.). (12) In a rulerless land the twice-born (other than Brahmans, *viz*, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas) given to the performance of sacrifices and self-controlled Brahmans observing austere vows do not undertake sacrificial performances in which everyone participating in it is both an officiating priest and a sacrificer. (13) In a rulerless land (even) Brahmans richly endowed with wealth do not pay handsome sacrificial fees to the priests officiating (even) at big sacrificial performances (wherever such performances are undertaken, lest they may be taken for rich men and looted by brigands). (14) In a rulerless land festivals (in honour of deities) in which actors and dancers exhibit their art in a highly ecstatic mood, and convivial gatherings promoting the welfare of the state do not gather strength. (15) In a rulerless land parties to a law-suit are not able to have their dispute settled, nor are those given to hearing stories from the Purāṇas etc. pleased with such stories told by those to whom the narration of such stories is agreeable. (16) In a rulerless land virgins decked with gold ornaments do not for their part go united to gardens to sport at dusk (for fear of being abducted or violated by miscreants). (17) In a rulerless land wealthy husbandmen and cowherds, even though well protected (by their attendants) do not sleep with open doors (for fear of burglars and dacoits). (18)

नाराजके जनपदे वाहनैः शीघ्रवाहिभिः । नरा निर्यान्त्यरण्यानि नारीभिः सह कामिनः ॥ १९ ॥
नाराजके जनपदे बद्धघण्टा विषाणिनः । अटन्ति राजमार्गेषु कुञ्जराः षष्टिहायनाः ॥ २० ॥

नाराजके जनपदे शरान् संततमस्यताम् । श्रूयते तलनिर्घोष इष्वस्त्राणामुपासने ॥ २१ ॥
नाराजके जनपदे वणिजो दूरगामिनः । गच्छन्ति क्षेममध्वानं बहुपण्यसमाचिताः ॥ २२ ॥
नाराजके जनपदे चरत्येकचरो वशी । भावयन्नात्मनाऽऽत्मानं यत्र सायंगृहो मुनिः ॥ २३ ॥
नाराजके जनपदे योगक्षेमः प्रवर्तते । न चाप्यराजके सेना शत्रून् विषहते युधि ॥ २४ ॥
नाराजके जनपदे हृष्टैः परमवाजिभिः । नराः संयान्ति सहसा रथैश्च प्रतिमण्डिताः ॥ २५ ॥
नाराजके जनपदे नराः शास्त्रविशारदाः । संवदन्तोपतिष्ठन्ते वनेषूपवनेषु वा ॥ २६ ॥
नाराजके जनपदे माल्यमोदकदक्षिणाः । देवताभ्यर्चनार्थाय कल्प्यन्ते नियतैर्जनैः ॥ २७ ॥
नाराजके जनपदे चन्दनागुरुरूषिताः । राजपुत्रा विराजन्ते वसन्त इव शाखिनः ॥ २८ ॥

"In a rulerless land lustful men do not drive in swift-going conveyances with women to pleasure-groves (for enjoying the forest scenery). (19) In a rulerless land sixty-year-old (army) tuskers do not (for fear of being deprived of their tusks or bells) move about on the main roads with bells fastened to their girths. (20) In a ruler-less land the sound of plucking the bow-string with the palm produced by Kṣatriyas uninterruptedly discharging arrows while practising the use of bows is not heard. (21). In a ruler-less land merchants travelling far and wide do not safely move about fully equipped with abundant salable goods. (22) In a rulerless land self-controlled ascetics moving all by themselves and contemplating on the Self with their own mind and taking up their abode wherever the evening falls do not move about (freely for want of hospitable householders) (23) In a rulerless land there is no acquisition of property and no security of possessions. Nor is the army able in a rulerless land to vanquish the foes in a battle. (24) In a rulerless land people do not quickly move out decked with ornaments in chariots driven by spirited horses of excellent breed. (25) In a rulerless land men well-versed in sacred lore do not meet (freely) holding disputations in forests and groves. (26) In a rulerless land flowers, sweetmeats and sacrificial fees are not got together for the worship of deities by self-controlled men. (27) In a rulerless land princes smeared with paste of sandal and aloe wood do not figure prominently as trees in the vernal season. (28)

यथा ह्यनुदका नद्यो यथा वाप्यतृणं वनम् । अगोपाला यथा गावस्तथा राष्ट्रमराजकम् ॥ २९ ॥
ध्वजो रथस्य प्रज्ञानं धूमो ज्ञानं विभावसोः । तेषां यो नो ध्वजो राजा स देवत्वमितो गतः ॥ ३० ॥
नाराजके जनपदे स्वकं भवति कस्यचित् । मत्स्या इव जना नित्यं भक्षयन्ति परस्परम् ॥ ३१ ॥
ये हि सम्भिन्नमर्यादा नास्तिकाश्छिन्नसंशयाः । तेऽपि भावाय कल्पन्ते राजदण्डनिपीडिताः ॥ ३२ ॥
यथा दृष्टिः शरीरस्य नित्यमेव प्रवर्तते । तथा नरेन्द्रो राष्ट्रस्य प्रभवः सत्यधर्मयोः ॥ ३३ ॥
राजा सत्यं च धर्मश्च राजा कुलवतां कुलम् । राजा माता पिता चैव राजा हितकरो नृणाम् ॥ ३४ ॥
यमो वैश्रवणः शक्रो वरुणश्च महाबलः । विशिष्यन्ते नरेन्द्रेण वृत्तेन महता ततः ॥ ३५ ॥
अहो तम इवेदं स्यान्न प्रज्ञायेत किंचन । राजा चेन्न भवेल्लोके विभजन् साध्वसाधुनी ॥ ३६ ॥
जीवत्यपि महाराजे तवैव वचनं वयम् । नातिक्रमामहे सर्वे वेलां प्राप्येव सागरः ॥ ३७ ॥

स नः समीक्ष्य द्विजवर्य वृत्तं नृपं विना राष्ट्रमरण्यभूतम् ।
कुमारमिक्ष्वाकुसुतं तथान्यं त्वमेव राजानमिहाभिषेचय ॥ ३८ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे सप्तषष्टितमः सर्गः ॥ ६७ ॥

"A state without a ruler is really no better than rivers without water, a woodland without grass and cows without a keeper. (29) A standard is the distinguishing mark of a chariot, while smoke is a testimony to (the presence of) fire. King Daśaratha, who (likewise) brought us, counsellors, into prominence (by bestowing this honour on us) has passed from the human state to the state of gods. (30) In a rulerless land nothing is one's own in the eyes of anyone. Like fishes men always devour one another. (31) (In the absence of a stable government) even those who do not believe in life after death and have flagrantly violated the rules of conduct prescribed by the Vedas and who have (consequently) been tormented with punishment inflicted by the king and whose fear (of punishment) has (now) been dispelled (by the anarchy prevailing at the time) are able to exercise authority (over others). (32) (Just) as the eye ever strives for the good of the body (by serving as a guide to it and showing it the right path), so does the king, who is the fountain of truth and righteousness, ever strive for the good of the state. (33) The king is truthfulness and virtue (incarnate); the king constitutes the nobility of birth in men of a high pedigree. The king is the mother as well as the father; the king is the benefactor of men. (34) (Even) Yama (the god of retribution), Kubera (son of Viśravā, the god of riches), Indra (the ruler of gods) and the very mighty Varuṇa (the deity presiding over water) are outstripped by a king of excellent conduct by virtue of such conduct (inasmuch as he combines in himself the virtues of all the above-named deities). (35) If there is no king demarcating good and evil in the world, oh, this world will be reduced to (utter) darkness as it were and nothing can be clearly perceived. (36) Even while the emperor was alive, we all never violated your command only any more than the oceans overstep the coastline on reaching it. (37) Therefore, fully considering our (past) conduct (which has ever been loyal to the king and devoted to the best interests of the state) and looking on the state, which has been converted into a (veritable) jungle for want of a king, crown you alone as king on this throne any prince who is a scion of Ikṣwāku, or anyone else, O jewel among the Brahmans!" (38)

Thus ends Canto Sixty-seven in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

अष्टषष्टितमः सर्गः

Canto LXVIII

With the concurrence of Mārkaṇḍeya and other sages, Vasiṣṭha despatches messengers to call back Bharata and Śatrughna from their maternal grandfather's. They leave forthwith for the capital of Kekaya and quickly enter that city.

तेषां तद् वचनं श्रुत्वा वसिष्ठः प्रत्युवाच ह । मित्रामात्यजनान् सर्वान् ब्राह्मणांस्तानिदं वचः ॥ १ ॥
यदसौ मातुलकुले दत्तराज्यः परं सुखी । भरतो वसति भ्रात्रा शत्रुघ्नेन मुदान्वितः ॥ २ ॥
तच्छीघ्रं जवना दूता गच्छन्तु त्वरितं हयैः । आनेतुं भ्रातरौ वीरौ किं समीक्षामहे वयम् ॥ ३ ॥

गच्छन्त्विति ततः सर्वे वसिष्ठं वाक्यमब्रुवन् । तेषां तद् वचनं श्रुत्वा वसिष्ठो वाक्यमब्रवीत् ॥ ४ ॥
एहि सिद्धार्थ विजय जयन्ताशोक नन्दन । श्रूयतामितिकर्तव्यं सर्वानेव ब्रवीमि वः ॥ ५ ॥
पुरं राजगृहं गत्वा शीघ्रं शीघ्रजवैर्हयैः । त्यक्तशोकैरिदं वाच्यः शासनाद् भरतो मम ॥ ६ ॥
पुरोहितस्त्वां कुशलं प्राह सर्वे च मन्त्रिणः । त्वरमाणश्च निर्याहि कृत्यमात्ययिकं त्वया ॥ ७ ॥
मा चास्मै प्रोषितं रामं मा चास्मै पितरं मृतम् । भवन्तः शंसिषुर्गत्वा राघवाणामितः क्षयम् ॥ ८ ॥
कौशेयानि च वस्त्राणि भूषणानि वराणि च । क्षिप्रमादाय राज्ञश्च भरतस्य च गच्छत ॥ ९ ॥

Hearing the aforesaid speech of the counsellors (Mārkaṇḍeya and others), Vasiṣṭha, they say, addressed the following words to the king's friends, the ministers as well as to all the Brahmans assembled there on that occasion:—(1) "Since the celebrated Bharata, on whom kingship has been bestowed (by the emperor as urged by Kaikeyī), is leading a most happy and joyous life at his maternal uncle's with his (younger) brother Śatrughna; therefore let swift messengers proceed quickly on horses to bring the two gallant brothers. What (else) can we thoughtfully consider ?" (2-3) Then all submitted to Vasiṣṭha as follows:—"Let the messengers depart." Hearing that reply of the counsellors, Vasiṣṭha (again) spoke as follows:—(4) "Come along, O Siddhārtha, Vijaya, Jayanta, Aśoka and Nandana ! Please hear what has got to be done by you. I speak to you all. (5) Reaching the city of Rājagṛha quickly on (the back of) horses galloping at a swift speed, and shaking off grief, you should speak to Bharata under my orders as follows:—(6) 'The family priest as well as all the counsellors have told you that all is well. (Pray) depart (hence) hastily; there is some most urgent business awaiting you.' (7) Going there (pray) do not inform you him of Rāma having gone into exile or of his father having demised or of the (threatened) destruction of the scions of Raghu as a result of these incidents. (8) Taking (with you) silken robes as well as excellent ornaments for the king (Bharata's maternal grandfather) and Bharata (as a present from the king of Ayodhya), depart at once." (9)

दत्तपथ्यशना दूता जग्मुः स्वं स्वं निवेशनम् । केकयांस्ते गमिष्यन्तो हयानारुह्य सम्मतान् ॥ १० ॥
ततः प्रास्थानिकं कृत्वा कार्यशेषमनन्तरम् । वसिष्ठेनाभ्यनुज्ञाता दूताः संत्वरितं ययुः ॥ ११ ॥
न्यन्तेनापरतालस्य प्रलम्बस्योत्तरं प्रति । निषेवमाणास्ते जग्मुर्नदीं मध्येन मालिनीम् ॥ १२ ॥
ते हास्तिनपुरे गङ्गां तीर्त्वा प्रत्यङ्मुखा ययुः । पञ्चालदेशमासाद्य मध्येन कुरुजाङ्गलम् ॥ १३ ॥
सरांसि च सुफुल्लानि नदीश्च विमलोदकाः । निरीक्षमाणा जग्मुस्ते दूताः कार्यवशाद् द्रुतम् ॥ १४ ॥
ते प्रसन्नोदकां दिव्यां नानाविहगसेविताम् । उपातिजग्मुर्वेगेन शरदण्डां जलाकुलाम् ॥ १५ ॥

Having been furnished with the wherewithals to purchase provisions for the journey and while about to leave for the Kekaya kingdom mounting horses thought highly of (for their swiftness), the messengers proceeded each to his own house (to take leave of his own people). (10) Having immediately finished all preparations that remained to be made for the journey, and duly permitted by Vasiṣṭha, the messengers proceeded post haste (to their destination). (11) They moved on touching Mālinī river flowing between the extreme (southern) end of Aparatāla mountain and the northern end of Pralamba mountain. (12) Crossing the Ganga at

Hastinapur they proceeded westward and, reaching the territory of Pañchāla through Kurujāngala and keenly perceiving lakes with full-blown flowers and rivers containing limpid waters, the aforesaid messengers swiftly moved on because of (the pressing nature of) their errand. (13-14) Reaching the bank of the charming river Śaradaṇḍā, which not only contained translucent waters but was also full of water and was frequented by birds of various kinds, they speedily crossed it. (15)

निकूलवृक्षमासाद्य दिव्यं सत्योपयाचनम् । अभिगम्याभिवाद्यं तं कुलिङ्गां प्राविशन् पुरीम् ॥ १६ ॥
अभिकालं ततः प्राप्य तेजोऽभिभवनाच्च्युताः । पितृपैतामहीं पुण्यां तेरुरिक्षुमतीं नदीम् ॥ १७ ॥
अवेक्ष्याञ्जलिपानांश्च ब्राह्मणान् वेदपारगान् । ययुर्मध्येन बाह्लीकान् सुदामानं च पर्वतम् ॥ १८ ॥
विष्णोः पदं प्रेक्षमाणा विपाशां चापि शाल्मलीम् । नदीर्वापीतटाकानि पल्वलानि सरांसि च ॥ १९ ॥
पश्यन्तो विविधांश्चापि सिंहान् व्याघ्रान् मृगान् द्विपान् । ययुः पथातिमहता शासनं भर्तुरीप्सवः ॥ २० ॥
ते श्रान्तवाहना दूता विकृष्टेन सता पथा । गिरिव्रजं पुरवरं शीघ्रमासेदुरञ्जसा ॥ २१ ॥
भर्तुः प्रियार्थं कुलरक्षणार्थं भर्तुश्च वंशस्य परिग्रहार्थम् ।
अहेडमानास्त्वरया स्म दूता रात्र्यां तु ते तत्पुरमेव याताः ॥ २२ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डेऽष्टषष्टितमः सर्गः ॥ ६८ ॥

Reaching a holy tree (inhabited by some divinity) standing on the western bank of the Śaradaṇḍā, and named Satyopayāchana (so called because prayers addressed to it invariably proved efficacious), which was worthy of salutation, and going round it clockwise (as a token of respect), the messengers entered the city of Kulingā. (16) Emerged from the village of Tejobhibhavana and reaching thence the village of Abhikāla, the messengers crossed the holy river Ikṣumatī, associated with the father and grandfather of the deceased emperor. (17) Nay, perceiving Brahmans who had mastered the Vedas and lived on as much water as could be contained in the hollow of their palms, they reached the Sudāmā mountain in the interior of the Bāhlīka kingdom (now known by the name of Balkh). (18) Beholding the spot (on the top of Sudāma mountain) containing the footprints of Lord Viṣṇu, as well as the rivers Vipāśā (now known by the name of Beas) and Śālmalī and other rivers, big wells provided with stairs to reach the water and ponds, pools and lakes, and looking on lions, tigers, deer and elephants of various kinds, they proceeded along an exceptionally broad highway, keen as they were to execute the command of their master. (19-20) Even though their horses felt exhausted, the messengers shortly and directly reached the foremost town of Girivraja (the capital of the Kekaya kingdom) by a long yet peaceful route. (21) For the pleasure of their master (Sage Vasiṣṭha) as well as for the protection of the people and for (vindicating) the honour of their king's race the messengers for their part respectfully and speedily entered that town during the night itself. (22)

Thus ends Canto Sixty-eight in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

एकोनसप्ततितमः सर्गः

Canto LXIX

Finding Bharata oppressed and sad, his friends try to beguile him by means of music and narration of stories. But when the prince does not return to his normal mood even then, they inquire of him as to what makes him pensive and Bharata tells them how he saw a bad dream the previous night.

यामेव रात्रिं ते दूताः प्रविशन्ति स्म तां पुरीम् । भरतेनापि तां रात्रिं स्वप्नो दृष्टोऽयमप्रियः ॥ १ ॥
व्युष्टामेव तु तां रात्रिं दृष्ट्वा तं स्वप्नमप्रियम् । पुत्रो राजाधिराजस्य सुभृशं पर्यतप्यत ॥ २ ॥
तप्यमानं तमाज्ञाय वयस्याः प्रियवादिनः । आयासं विनयिष्यन्तः सभायां चक्रिरे कथाः ॥ ३ ॥
वादयन्ति तदा शान्तिं लासयन्त्यपि चापरे । नाटकान्यपरे स्माहुर्हास्यानि विविधानि च ॥ ४ ॥
स तैर्महात्मा भरतः सखिभिः प्रियवादिभिः । गोष्ठीहास्यानि कुर्वद्भिर्न प्राहृष्यत राघवः ॥ ५ ॥
तमब्रवीत् प्रियसखो भरतं सखिभिर्वृतम् । सुहृद्भिः पर्युपासीनः किं सखे नानुमोदसे ॥ ६ ॥

The very night the aforesaid messengers entered that city (of Girivraja) an unpleasant dream, which is being described as follows, was seen by Bharata. (1) Seeing that unpleasant dream at an hour* when the night had well-nigh ended, Bharata (the emperor's son) felt extremely perturbed. (2) Finding him disconsolate, his friends, who (ever) spoke kindly (to him), commenced chatting in a coterie, seeking (as they did) to relieve his agony. (3) Some friends played upon musical instruments at that time, while others indulged in gentle dance (accompanied with vocal and instrumental music) with a view to relieving his anxiety, while (still) others read out (to him) dramas of various kinds having mirth for their dominant sentiment. (4) The aforesaid Bharata, a scion of Raghu and an exalted soul as he was, did not (however) feel much delighted in the company of those friends, who spoke kindly (to him) and indulged in jokes worthy of an assembly. (5) A beloved friend (of Bharata) spoke (as follows) to the said Bharata, who was surrounded by (many) friends.—"Why, O friend, do you not join us in rejoicing, sitting as you are in the midst of friends ?" (5)

एवं ब्रुवाणं सुहृदं भरतः प्रत्युवाच ह । शृणु त्वं यन्निमित्तं मे दैन्यमेतदुपागतम् ॥ ७ ॥
स्वप्ने पितरमद्राक्षं मलिनं मुक्तमूर्धजम् । पतन्तमद्रिशिखरात् कलुषे गोमये ह्रदे ॥ ८ ॥
प्लवमानश्च मे दृष्टः स तस्मिन् गोमये ह्रदे । पिबन्नञ्जलिना तैलं हसन्निव मुहुर्मुहुः ॥ ९ ॥
ततस्तिलोदनं भुक्त्वा पुनः पुनरधःशिराः । तैलेनाभ्यक्तसर्वाङ्गस्तैलमेवान्वगाहत ॥ १० ॥
स्वप्नेऽपि सागरं शुष्कं चन्द्रं च पतितं भुवि । उपरुद्धां च जगतीं तमसेव समावृताम् ॥ ११ ॥
औपवाह्यस्य नागस्य विषाणं शकलीकृतम् । सहसा चापि संशान्ता ज्वलिता जातवेदसः ॥ १२ ॥
अवदीर्णां च पृथिवीं शुष्कांश्च विविधान् द्रुमान् । अहं पश्यामि विध्वस्तान् सधूमांश्चैव पर्वतान् ॥ १३ ॥
पीठे कार्ष्णायसे चैव निषण्णं कृष्णवाससम् । प्रहरन्ति स्म राजानं प्रमदाः कृष्णपिङ्गलाः ॥ १४ ॥
त्वरमाणश्च धर्मात्मा रक्तमाल्यानुलेपनः । रथेन खरयुक्तेन प्रयातो दक्षिणामुखः ॥ १५ ॥
प्रहसन्तीव राजानं प्रमदा रक्तवासिनी । प्रकर्षन्ती मया दृष्टा राक्षसी विकृतानना ॥ १६ ॥

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* A dream seen at the close of night is believed to come true in a majority of cases.

To the friend speaking as aforesaid, Bharata replied as follows:—"Hear you the circumstances due to which this depression has overtaken me. (7) In a dream I saw father dejected and falling from a mountain-peak, his hair dishevelled, into a dirty pool full of cow-dung. (8) He was (further) seen by me swimming in that pool of cow-dung, drinking oil from the hollow of his palms and laughing as it were again and again. (9) Then, partaking of rice cooked with sesame seeds and (himself) smeared all over with sesame oil, he took a dip again and again head foremost in the oil. (10) Also in the dream I saw the ocean dry and the moon fallen on the earth and the (entire) globe molested (by Rākṣasas and others) and enveloped as it were in darkness. (11) I (further) beheld a tusk of the king's elephant broken to pieces and blazing fires suddenly extinguished. (12) I also saw the earth riven and trees of various kinds withered up and mountains too emitting smoke and razed to the ground. (13) Young women, dark and reddish brown of complexion, assailed the king, seated on an iron seat attired in black. (14) Nay, adorned with a garland of crimson flowers and smeared with red sandal-paste, the pious-minded king hastily departed southward in a chariot drawn by donkeys. (15) A young ogress with an ugly face and clad in crimson was seen by me mocking the king as it were and dragging him. (16)

एवमेतन्मया दृष्टमिमां रात्रिं भयावहाम् । अहं रामोऽथवा राजा लक्ष्मणो वा मरिष्यति ॥ १७ ॥
नरो यानेन यः स्वप्ने खरयुक्तेन याति हि । अचिरात्तस्य धूमाग्रं चितायां सम्प्रदृश्यते ॥ १८ ॥
एतन्निमित्तं दीनोऽहं न वचः प्रतिपूजये । शुष्यतीव च मे कण्ठो न स्वस्थमिव मे मनः ॥ १९ ॥
न पश्यामि भयस्थानं भयं चैवोपधारये ।
भ्रष्टश्च स्वरयोगो मे छाया चापगता मम । जुगुप्स इव चात्मानं न च पश्यामि कारणम् ॥ २० ॥
इमां च दुःस्वप्नगतिं निशम्य हि त्वनेकरूपामवितर्कितां पुरा ।
भयं महत्तु हृदयान्न याति मे विचिन्त्य राजानमचिन्त्यदर्शनम् ॥ २१ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे एकोनसप्ततितमः सर्गः ॥ ६९ ॥

"During the last night, fearful as it was, this was the vision seen by me as aforesaid. (This prognosticates that) either myself or Śrī Rāma or the king or Lakṣmaṇa is going to die. (17) A column of smoke is surely and vividly perceived before long on the funeral pile of a man who drives in a dream in a chariot drawn by donkeys. (18) This is why I feel depressed and do not make much of your words. My throat is getting parched as it were and my mind is not quite at ease. (19) I do not perceive any (tangible) ground for fear, yet I experience fear. Nay, my voice has become hoarse and my lustre has departed. Moreover I have begun to hate myself, yet I do not see any cause (for it). (20) (Even) as I reflect on the course of my evil dreams, which were seen in many forms,—a course which was never imagined (by me) before,—and (even) as I think deeply of the king, whose sight is something which can no longer be anticipated, the great fear that has been roused (in me) does not depart from my heart. (21)"

Thus ends Canto Sixty-nine in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

सप्ततितमः सर्गः

Canto LXX

While Bharata was narrating to his friends the dream seen by him the previous night, the messengers from Ayodhya arrive in his presence and, bowing low to Bharata, communicate to him the orders of Sage Vasiṣṭha. Having heard of the welfare of all from the mouth of the messengers, the prince takes leave of his maternal grandfather and others and departs for Ayodhya.

भरते ब्रुवति स्वप्नं दूतास्ते क्लान्तवाहनाः । प्रविश्यासह्यपरिखं रम्यं राजगृहं पुरम् ॥ १ ॥
समागम्य च राज्ञा ते राजपुत्रेण चार्चिताः । राज्ञः पादौ गृहीत्वा च तमूचुर्भरतं वचः ॥ २ ॥
पुरोहितस्त्वां कुशलं प्राह सर्वे च मन्त्रिणः । त्वरमाणश्च निर्याहि कृत्यमात्ययिकं त्वया ॥ ३ ॥
इमानि च महार्हाणि वस्त्राण्याभरणानि च । प्रतिगृह्य विशालाक्ष मातुलस्य च दापय ॥ ४ ॥
अत्र विंशतिकोट्यस्तु नृपतेर्मातुलस्य ते । दशकोट्यस्तु सम्पूर्णास्तथैव च नृपात्मज ॥ ५ ॥
प्रतिगृह्य तु तत् सर्वं स्वनुरक्तः सुहृज्जने । दूतानुवाच भरतः कामैः सम्प्रतिपूज्य तान् ॥ ६ ॥

Entering the lovely city of Rājagṛha,—the moat enclosing which was unassailable (by the enemies),—at a time when Bharata was narrating the dream (to his friends), their horses being exhausted, nay, meeting the king (of Kekaya) as well as the Crown prince and treated with honour (by them), and touching (as a mark of respect) the feet of Bharata (their prospective king), the aforesaid messengers spoke to the celebrated Bharata as follows:—(1-2) "Sage Vasiṣṭha (the family priest) as well as all the counsellors tell you that all is well. Yet please depart expeditiously. There is business with you, which cannot brook delay. (3) Nay, accepting (from us) these valuable robes and jewels, O large-eyed prince, have them presented to your maternal grandfather and maternal uncle too. (4) Of these, articles worth twenty crores of course are meant for the king; while full ten crores worth of articles are likewise meant for your maternal uncle, O prince !" (5) Accepting for his part all those presents (brought by the messengers from Ayodhya), Bharata, who was very fond of his near and dear ones, had them presented (on behalf of his royal father) to his maternal grandfather and maternal uncle and, having entertained the messengers with articles of food and drink coveted by them spoke to them (as follows):—(6)

कच्चित् स कुशली राजा पिता दशरथो मम । कच्चिदारोग्यता रामे लक्ष्मणे च महात्मनि ॥ ७ ॥
आर्या च धर्मनिरता धर्मज्ञा धर्मवादिनी । अरोगा चापि कौसल्या माता रामस्य धीमतः ॥ ८ ॥
कच्चित् सुमित्रा धर्मज्ञा जननी लक्ष्मणस्य या । शत्रुघ्नस्य च वीरस्य अरोगा चापि मध्यमा ॥ ९ ॥
आत्मकामा सदा चण्डी क्रोधना प्राज्ञमानिनी । अरोगा चापि मे माता कैकेयी किमुवाच ह ॥ १० ॥
एवमुक्तास्तु ते दूता भरतेन महात्मना । ऊचुः सम्प्रश्रितं वाक्यमिदं तं भरतं तदा ॥ ११ ॥

"Is my father, the celebrated Daśaratha, doing well? Does good health abide in Śrī Rāma and the high-souled Lakṣmaṇa? (7) And is the mother of the wise Śrī Rāma, the noble Kausalyā, who is devoted to virtue, knows what is right and talks virtue, enjoying good health? (8) Is my intermediate mother, Sumitrā,—who knows what is right and is the mother of Lakṣmaṇa and the valiant Śatrughna,—also free from ailment? (9) Is my own mother, Kaikeyī,—who always seeks to gain her own ends, is violent and given to wrath and accounts herself wise,—also healthy and what message has she sent (for me)?" (10) Questioned thus by the high-souled Bharata on that occasion, the aforesaid messengers for their part addressed the following most polite words to the said Bharata:—(11)

कुशलास्ते नरव्याघ्र येषां कुशलमिच्छसि । श्रीश्च त्वां वृणुते पद्मा युज्यतां चापि ते रथः ॥ १२ ॥
भरतश्चापि तान् दूतानेवमुक्तोऽभ्यभाषत । आपृच्छेऽहं महाराजं दूताः संत्वरयन्ति माम् ॥ १३ ॥
एवमुक्त्वा तु तान् दूतान् भरतः पार्थिवात्मजः । दूतैः संचोदितो वाक्यं मातामहमुवाच ह ॥ १४ ॥
राजन् पितुर्गमिष्यामि सकाशं दूतचोदितः । पुनरप्यहमेष्यामि यदा मे त्वं स्मरिष्यसि ॥ १५ ॥
भरतेनैवमुक्तस्तु नृपो मातामहस्तदा । तमुवाच शुभं वाक्यं शिरस्याघ्राय राघवम् ॥ १६ ॥
गच्छ तातानुजाने त्वां कैकेयी सुप्रजास्त्वया । मातरं कुशलं ब्रूयाः पितरं च परंतप ॥ १७ ॥
पुरोहितं च कुशलं ये चान्ये द्विजसत्तमाः । तौ च तात महेष्वासौ भ्रातरौ रामलक्ष्मणौ ॥ १८ ॥

"They are (all) well, whose welfare you seek, O tiger among men! Nay, holding a lotus (in her hand), Śrī (the goddess of fortune), looks on you with favour. Therefore let your chariot be equipped (for journey)." (12) Told thus Bharata too replied to the messengers, "I shall (presently) seek the permission of the monarch (my maternal grandfather) saying that you (the messengers) are urging me to make haste (to depart for Ayodhya)". (13) Having told the messengers thus, Prince Bharata for his part made the following submission to his maternal grandfather, as entreated by the messengers: so the tradition goes:—(14) "Urged by the messengers I shall, Your Majesty, return to the presence of my father. I shall come again whenever you remember me." (15) Smelling (as a token of affection) the head of Bharata (a scion of Raghu), when requested as aforesaid by the latter on that occasion, the king, his maternal grandfather, addressed to him the following agreeable words:—(16) "Depart, dear child! I grant you leave to return (to Ayodhya). Kaikeyī is blessed with a noble son in you. Communicate, O tormentor of enemies, our welfare to your mother as well as to your father (on my behalf), also to Sage Vasiṣṭha (the family priest) and to other jewels among Brahmans, whoever are present (on the occasion) and (lastly) to the two celebrated brothers, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, the wielders of mighty bows." (17-18)

तस्मै हस्त्युत्तमांश्चित्रान् कम्बलानजिनानि च । सत्कृत्य केकयो राजा भरताय ददौ धनम् ॥ १९ ॥
अन्तःपुरेऽतिसंवृद्धान् व्याघ्रवीर्यबलोपमान् । दंष्ट्रायुक्तान् महाकायाञ्शुनश्चोपायनं ददौ ॥ २० ॥
रुक्मनिष्कसहस्रे द्वे षोडशाश्वशतानि च । सत्कृत्य केकयीपुत्रं केकयो धनमादिशत् ॥ २१ ॥
तदामात्यानभिप्रेतान् विश्वास्यांश्च गुणान्वितान् । ददावश्वपतिः शीघ्रं भरतायानुयायिनः ॥ २२ ॥
ऐरावतानैन्द्रशिरान नागान् वै प्रियदर्शनान् । खराञ्शीघ्रान् सुसंयुक्तान् मातुलोऽस्मै धनं ददौ ॥ २३ ॥

Treating him with honour, the king of Kekaya bestowed on the aforesaid Bharata foremost of elephants, multi-coloured blankets, deerskins and riches (consisting of gold vessels etc.). (19) He also gave as a present dogs of enormous size, posseseed of large teeth, brought up with care in the gynaeceum (itself) and vying in prowess and strength (of body) with a tiger. (20) Receiving him kindly, the king of the Kekayas (further) bestowed on Bharata (the son of Kaikeyī) wealth consisting of two thousand gold mohurs and sixteen hundred horses. (21) On that occasion King Aśwapati (also) quickly sent as escorts for Bharata esteemed and trustworthy ministers endowed with good qualities. (22) Bharata's maternal uncle (Yudhājit) too bestowed on him wealth consisting of elephants of the Airāvata breed and those born in the territory of Indraśira and agreeable to the sight, as well as swift-going and well-trained mules. (23)

स दत्तं केकयेन्द्रेण धनं तन्नाभ्यनन्दत । भरतः केकयीपुत्रो गमनत्वरया तदा ॥ २४ ॥
बभूव ह्यस्य हृदये चिन्ता सुमहती तदा । त्वरया चापि दूतानां स्वप्नस्यापि च दर्शनात् ॥ २५ ॥
स स्ववेश्माभ्यतिक्रम्य नरनागाश्वसंकुलम् । प्रपेदे सुमहच्छ्रीमान् राजमार्गमनुत्तमम् ॥ २६ ॥
अभ्यतीत्य ततोऽपश्यदन्तःपुरमनुत्तमम् । ततस्तद् भरतः श्रीमानाविवेशानिवारितः ॥ २७ ॥
स मातामहमापृच्छ्य मातुलं च युधाजितम् । रथमारुह्य भरतः शत्रुघ्नसहितो ययौ ॥ २८ ॥
रथान् मण्डलचक्रांश्च योजयित्वा परं शतम् । उष्ट्रगोऽश्वखरैर्भृत्या भरतं यान्तमन्वयुः ॥ २९ ॥
बलेन गुप्तो भरतो महात्मा सहार्यकस्यात्मसमैरमात्यैः ।
आदाय शत्रुघ्नमपेतशत्रुर्गृहाद् ययौ सिद्ध इवेन्द्रलोकात् ॥ ३० ॥
इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे सप्ततितमः सर्गः ॥ ७० ॥

Because of his hurry to depart (for Ayodhya) Bharata, the son of Kaikeyī, did not at that moment welcome the aforesaid wealth gifted by the king of the Kekayas. (24) Nay, due to the hastening of the messengers and also because of his having seen the (ominous) dream indeed a very great anxiety appeared in his heart at that time. (25) Returning to his own residence and then leaving it, Bharata, who (now) owned a very large fortune, reached the main road, which was crowded with men, elephants and horses and unexcelled (by other roads). (26) Passing thence he saw the gynaeceum, which was unsurpassed (by other mansions). The glorious Bharata thereupon entered it unchallenged. (27) Taking leave of his maternal grandfather (and grandmother) as well as of his maternal uncle, Yudhājit, (and aunt) and mounting his chariot with Śatrughna, the said Bharata left (for Ayodhya). (28) Fitting a hundred other chariots having circular wheels with camels, bullocks, horses and mules, servants (of King Aśwapati) followed Bharata as he departed. (29) Guarded by a detachment sent by his maternal grandfather and taking Śatrughna (with him), Bharata, who was possessed of great fortitude and had no enemies, departed with ministers who were equalled by (none but) themselves from his residence (even) as a Siddha (a member of a class of demigods credited with supernatural powers by virtue of their very birth) would from the realm of Indra (the lord of paradise). (30)

Thus ends Canto Seventy in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

एकसप्ततितमः सर्गः

Canto LXXI

When Bharata reaches Ayodhya after crossing many streams and rivers and passing through different territories and finds the city cheerless and wearing a deserted look, he sets about brooding and speculating as to what may be the reason for this and, speaking to the charioteer about it, enters the palace dejected and disconsolate.

स प्राङ्मुखो राजगृहादभिनिर्याय वीर्यवान् । ततः सुदामां द्युतिमान् संतीर्यावेक्ष्य तां नदीम् ॥ १ ॥
ह्लादिनीं दूरपारां च प्रत्यक्स्रोतस्तरङ्गिणीम् । शतद्रुमतरच्छ्रीमान् नदीमिक्ष्वाकुनन्दनः ॥ २ ॥
ऐलधाने नदीं तीर्त्वा प्राप्य चापरपर्वतान् । शिलामाकुर्वतीं तीर्त्वा आग्नेयं शल्यकर्षणम् ॥ ३ ॥
सत्यसंधः शुचिर्भूत्वा प्रेक्षमाणः शिलावहाम् । अभ्यगात् स महाशैलान् वनं चैत्ररथं प्रति ॥ ४ ॥
सरस्वतीं च गङ्गां च युग्मेन प्रतिपद्य च । उत्तरान् वीरमत्स्यानां भारुण्डं प्राविशद् वनम् ॥ ५ ॥
वेगिनीं च कुलिङ्गाख्यां ह्लादिनीं पर्वतावृताम् । यमुनां प्राप्य संतीर्णो बलमाश्वासयत् तदा ॥ ६ ॥
शीतीकृत्य तु गात्राणि क्लान्तानाश्वास्य वाजिनः । तत्र स्नात्वा च पीत्वा च प्रायादादाय चोदकम् ॥ ७ ॥
राजपुत्रो महारण्यमनभीक्ष्णोपसेवितम् । भद्रो भद्रेण यानेन मरुतः खमिवात्यगात् ॥ ८ ॥
भागीरथीं दुष्प्रतरां सोंऽशुधाने महानदीम् । उपायाद् राघवस्तूर्णं प्राग्वटे विश्रुते पुरे ॥ ९ ॥

Proceeding from Rājagṛha in an easterly direction and then surveying and crossing the well-known river Sudāmā* as well as the broad river Hrādinī, the powerful and dignified Bharata, a glorious scion of Ikṣwāku, crossed the river Śatadru (the modern Sutlej), whose stream takes a westward course. (1-2) Crossing another stream at Ailadhāna (a village of that name) and reaching the territory of Aparaparvata and crossing a river which petrified everything thrown into it, he reached the tract lying to the south-east and known by the name of Śalyākarṣaṇa (so called because it abounded in a herb possessing the virtue of extracting a thorn etc.). (3) Gazing on the river Śilāvahā (so called because it carried away even rocks along its swift stream) and getting purified (through bathing in it), Bharata (who was true to his promise) crossed the Mahāśaila hills heading towards the forest of Chaitraratha. (4) Reaching the river Saraswatī (flowing towards the west) and (a branch of) the (holy) Ganga at their confluence, he passed through the northern part of the Vīramatsya territory and entered the forest of Bhāruṇḍa. (5) Having duly crossed the swift and thundering river named Kuliṅgā, hemmed in by mountains, and reaching the Yamuna, he allowed the detachment (accompanying him) to rest for the time being. (6) Refreshing the limbs of the horses (by bathing them) and giving the fatigued animals (food and) rest (in the shade

* The messengers sent to call Bharata from his maternal grandfather's rode to Rājagṛha by a shorter yet more difficult route through the forest region. Bharata, however, was accompanied by an army and therefore drove through a broader yet longer route. Hence it took him a full week to reach Ayodhya and he had to pass through places which the messengers did not come across in their journey.

of trees), nay, (himself) bathing and quenching his thirst, and taking water (for the journey ahead), Bharata proceeded further. (7) The prince, who had undergone propitious rites (before embarking on the long journey), crossed (speedily) by his excellent chariot the great forest (lying in the way), which was not frequented, (even) as the wind sweeps through the atmosphere. (8) Finding the great river Ganga (associated with the name of Emperor Bhagīratha, who was instrumental in bringing the stream to the terrestrial region) difficult to cross at (the village of) Aṁśudhāna, Bharata, (a scion of Raghu) hastily approached it (with a view to crossing it) at the well-known town of Prāgvaṭa (where it could be easily crossed). (9)

स गङ्गां प्राग्वटे तीर्त्वा समायात् कुटिकोष्टिकाम् । सबलस्तां स तीर्त्वाथ समगाद् धर्मवर्धनम् ॥ १० ॥
तोरणं दक्षिणार्धेन जम्बूप्रस्थं समागमत् । वरूथं च ययौ रम्यं ग्रामं दशरथात्मजः ॥ ११ ॥
तत्र रम्ये वने वासं कृत्वासौ प्राङ्मुखो ययौ । उद्यानमुज्जिहानायाः प्रियका यत्र पादपाः ॥ १२ ॥
स तांस्तु प्रियकान् प्राप्य शीघ्रानास्थाय वाजिनः । अनुज्ञाप्याथ भरतो वाहिनीं त्वरितो ययौ ॥ १३ ॥
वासं कृत्वा सर्वतीर्थे तीर्त्वा चोत्तानिकां नदीम् । अन्या नदीश्च विविधैः पार्वतीयैस्तुरंगमैः ॥ १४ ॥
हस्तिपृष्ठकमासाद्य कुटिकामत्यवर्तत । ततार च नरव्याघ्रो लोहित्ये च कपीवतीम् ॥ १५ ॥
एकसाले स्थाणुमतीं विनते गोमतीं नदीम् । कलिङ्गनगरे चापि प्राप्य सालवनं तदा ॥ १६ ॥
भरतः क्षिप्रमागच्छत् सुपरिश्रान्तवाहनः । वनं च समतीत्याशु शर्वर्यामरुणोदये ॥ १७ ॥
अयोध्यां मनुना राज्ञा निर्मितां स ददर्श ह । तां पुरीं पुरुषव्याघ्रः सप्तरात्रोषितः पथि ॥ १८ ॥

Crossing the (holy) Ganga at Prāgvaṭa, he reached the river Kuṭikoṣṭikā. Again crossing the latter along with the detachment (accompanying him), he duly arrived at (the village of) Dharmavardhana. (10) Bharata (son of Daśaratha) duly reached (the village of) Jambūprastha through the southern portion of (the village of) Toraṇa and (then) arrived at the lovely village of Varūtha. (11) Having halted (for the night) in a delightful grove adjoining that village, he drove in an easterly direction to the garden of Ujjihānā (a city), in which existed (a cluster of) Kadamba trees. (12) Having reached those Kadamba trees and getting swifter horses yoked to his chariot and allowing the army to come slowly (since he had reached his own territory), Bharata for his part hastily proceeded (further). (13) Having halted (that night) in (the village of) Sarvatīrtha and forded (next morning) the river Uttānikā and other streams on the back of various mountain ponies and reaching (the village of) Hastipṛṣṭhaka, Bharata (a tiger among men) crossed the river Kuṭikā and at Lohitya (another village) crossed the river Kapīvatī (too). (14-15) He crossed the Sthāṇumatī at (the village of) Ekasāla and, reaching the river Gomti, he crossed it near (the village of) Vinata. And then Bharata quickly reached a grove of sal trees at Kalinganagara. Nay, hurriedly driving through the grove during the night, his horses having been completely exhausted, the tiger among men beheld the celebrated city of Ayodhya, founded by King (Vaivaswata) Manu, at dawn, having spent seven nights in the way: so the tradition goes. (16—18)

अयोध्यामग्रतो दृष्ट्वा सारथिं चेदमब्रवीत् । एषा नातिप्रतीता मे पुण्योद्याना यशस्विनी ॥ १९ ॥
अयोध्या दृश्यते दूरात्सारथे पाण्डुमृत्तिका । यज्विभिर्गुणसम्पन्नैर्ब्राह्मणैर्वेदपारगैः ॥ २० ॥
भूयिष्ठमृद्धैराकीर्णा राजर्षिवरपालिता । अयोध्यायां पुरा शब्दः श्रूयते तुमुलो महान् ॥ २१ ॥

समन्तान्नरनारीणां तमद्य न शृणोम्यहम् । उद्यानानि हि सायाह्ने क्रीडित्वोपरतैर्नरैः ॥ २२ ॥
समन्ताद् विप्रधावद्भिः प्रकाशन्ते ममान्यथा । तान्यद्यानुरुदन्तीव परित्यक्तानि कामिभिः ॥ २३ ॥
अरण्यभूतेव पुरी सारथे प्रतिभाति माम् ।
न ह्यत्र यानैर्दृश्यन्ते न गजैर्न च वाजिभिः । निर्यान्तो वाभियान्तो वा नरमुख्या यथा पुरा ॥ २४ ॥
उद्यानानि पुरा भान्ति मत्तप्रमुदितानि च । जनानां रतिसंयोगेष्वत्यन्तगुणवन्ति च ॥ २५ ॥
तान्येतान्यद्य पश्यामि निरानन्दानि सर्वशः । स्रस्तपर्णैरनुपथं विक्रोशद्भिरिव द्रुमैः ॥ २६ ॥
नाद्यापि श्रूयते शब्दो मत्तानां मृगपक्षिणाम् । सरक्तां मधुरां वाणीं कलं व्याहरतां बहु ॥ २७ ॥
चन्दनागुरुसम्पृक्तो धूपसम्मूर्च्छितोऽमलः । प्रवाति पवनः श्रीमान् किं नु नाद्य यथा पुरा ॥ २८ ॥
भेरीमृदङ्गवीणानां कोणसंघट्टितः पुनः । किमद्य शब्दो विरतः सदादीनगतिः पुरा ॥ २९ ॥
अनिष्टानि च पापानि पश्यामि विविधानि च । निमित्तान्यमनोज्ञानि तेन सीदति मे मनः ॥ ३० ॥
सर्वथा कुशलं सूत दुर्लभं मम बन्धुषु । तथा ह्यसति सम्मोहे हृदयं सीदतीव मे ॥ ३१ ॥

Nay, seeing Ayodhya in front of him, Bharata spoke as follows to the charioteer:—"This well-famed city, consisting of sacred gardens, does not look very cheerful to me. (19) Ayodhya, O charioteer, which was thickly crowded with Brahmans given to sacrificial performances, endowed with good qualities and well-versed in the Vedas, as well as with wealthy men and was protected by the foremost of royal sages, looks from a distance to be a heap of white clay. Formerly in Ayodhya was heard on all sides a great confused noise of men and women; I do not hear it today. Indeed gardens, which looked bright with men running helter-skelter on all sides, having ceased sporting (in the morning) after entering them at dusk and sporting (the whole night), appear to me (quite) different. Deserted by gallants, they are weeping as it were today. (20—23) The city, O charioteer, appears to me as converted into a woodland; for high-class men are not seen going out or coming here in conveyances or on (the back of) elephants or horses as before. (24) The gardens (in this city) formerly looked excited with joy and enraptured and were extremely favourable for love-contacts of men. (25) Today I find those very gardens bereft of joy in every way with their trees shedding (tears in the form of) leaves on the alleys and piteously wailing as it were. (26) Not even at this hour (of sunrise) is heard the cry of deer and birds in rut profusely and inarticulately giving forth their sweet and impassioned utterances. (27) I wonder how a pure and delightful breeze laden with the fragrance of sandalwood and aloe and scented with the fume of burnt incense does not blow today as before. (28) How has the sound, which ever proceeded unstintedly in the past, of kettledrums, clay tomtoms and Vinas, played upon with a drum-stick, palms or fingers, has ceased only today ? (29) I also perceive unwelcome, portentous and unpleasant omens of every description. My mind is feeling dejected on that score. (30) The all-round welfare of my near and dear ones is difficult to find, O charioteer ! (For) even when there is no (ostensible) cause for infatuation my heart is sinking as it were." (31)

विषण्णः श्रान्तहृदयस्त्रस्तः संलुलितेन्द्रियः । भरतः प्रविवेशाशु पुरीमिक्ष्वाकुपालिताम् ॥ ३२ ॥
द्वारेण वैजयन्तेन प्राविशच्छ्रान्तवाहनः । द्वाःस्थैरुत्थाय विजयमुक्तस्तैः सहितो ययौ ॥ ३३ ॥
स त्वनेकाग्रहृदयो द्वाःस्थं प्रत्यर्च्य तं जनम् । सूतमश्वपतेः क्लान्तमब्रवीत् तत्र राघवः ॥ ३४ ॥

Dejected and alarmed, his heart weary and senses extremely perturbed, Bharata speedily entered the city protected by the scions of Ikṣwāku. (32) His horses being fatigued, he effected his entry by the western gate (known by the name of Vaijayanta). Greeted with shouts of triumph by the porters, who rose to usher him in, he moved on accompanied by them. (33) Sending the porters back with honour, the said Bharata (a scion of Raghu) for his part, troubled as he was at heart, spoke on the spot to the wearied charioteer of King Aśwapati (as follows):— (34)

किमहं त्वरयाऽऽनीतः कारणेन विनानघ । अशुभाशङ्कि हृदयं शीलं च पततीव मे ॥ ३५ ॥
श्रुता नु यादृशाः पूर्वं नृपतीनां विनाशने । आकारांस्तानहं सर्वानिह पश्यामि सारथे ॥ ३६ ॥
सम्मार्जनविहीनानि परुषाण्युपलक्षये । असंयतकवाटानि श्रीविहीनानि सर्वशः ॥ ३७ ॥
बलिकर्मविहीनानि धूपसम्मोदनेन च । अनाशितकुटुम्बानि प्रभाहीनजनानि च ॥ ३८ ॥
अलक्ष्मीकानि पश्यामि कुटुम्बिभवनान्यहम् । अपेतमाल्यशोभानि असम्मृष्टाजिराणि च ॥ ३९ ॥
देवागाराणि शून्यानि न भान्तीह यथा पुरा । देवतार्चाः प्रविद्धाश्च यज्ञगोष्ठास्तथैव च ॥ ४० ॥
माल्यापणेषु राजन्ते नाद्य पण्यानि वा तथा । दृश्यन्ते वणिजोऽप्यद्य न यथा पूर्वमत्र वै ॥ ४१ ॥
ध्यानसंविग्नहृदया नष्टव्यापारयन्त्रिताः । देवायतनचैत्येषु दीनाः पक्षिमृगास्तथा ॥ ४२ ॥
मलिनं चाश्रुपूर्णाक्षं दीनं ध्यानपरं कृशम् । सस्त्रीपुंसं च पश्यामि जनमुत्कण्ठितं पुरे ॥ ४३ ॥

"Why have I been brought (to Ayodhya) in a hurry without (mentioning) any cause, O sinless one? My heart is (therefore) apprehensive of some misfortune and my composure is vanishing (as it were). (35) I observe at this moment, O charioteer, all those indications that have been heard of (by me) in the past as pointing to the demise of kings. (36) I behold the dwellings of householders unswept, dirty-coloured, shorn of splendour in every way and with open doors. (37) I find that no oblations have been offered in them to the various creatures, that they are devoid of odour coming from the burning of incense and bereft of fortune, that members of the household have not been fed in them (for many days past) and their inmates look pale. Temples which are no longer adorned with garlands (hanging on the gates), whose courtyards have not been swept (for the last so many days) and which are devoid of men, do not look charming now as before. Images of gods as well as sacrificial halls have been deserted; salable goods (such as flowers and garlands) do not figure prominently as before in flower marts today. Merchants too in this city, whose hearts are seized with fear due to anxiety and who feel dispirited because of their business having been brought to a standstill, do not appear (as happy) as they looked before. Nay, birds and beasts in temples and (other) places of worship are distressed. (38—42) Again, I behold the people in the city, including men and women, in soiled attire, miserable, worried, emaciated and sorrowful, with eyes full of tears." (43)

इत्येवमुक्त्वा भरतः सूतं तं दीनमानसः । तान्यनिष्टान्ययोध्यायां प्रेक्ष्य राजगृहं ययौ ॥ ४४ ॥

तां शून्यशृङ्गाटकवेश्मरथ्यां रजोऽरुणद्वारकवाटयन्त्राम् ।
दृष्ट्वा पुरीमिन्द्रपुरीप्रकाशां दुःखेन सम्पूर्णतरो बभूव ॥ ४५ ॥
बभूव पश्यन् मनसोऽप्रियाणि यान्यन्यदा नास्य पुरे बभूवुः ।
अवाक्शिरा दीनमना नहृष्टः पितुर्महात्मा प्रविवेश वेश्म ॥ ४६ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे एकसप्ततितमः सर्गः ॥ ७१ ॥

Perceiving those unwelcome indications in Ayodhya and having spoken to the said charioteer as above, Bharata drove to the royal palace afflicted in mind. (44) He was filled to the brim with sorrow to see that city, which shone (at one time) like Amarāvatī (the capital of Indra in paradise), with its cross-roads, houses and streets desolate and its doors and bolts soiled with dust. (45) Beholding things distasteful to the mind, things which had never come to pass in his city before, the high-souled Bharata became cheerless and entered his father's apartments distressed in mind, his head hung down. (46)

Thus ends Canto Seventy-one in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

द्विसप्ततितमः सर्गः

Canto LXXII

Entering his father's apartments and not finding him there, Bharata moves to his mother's apartments and, having communicated to her the welfare of his maternal grandfather and others on being questioned by her, inquires of her the whereabouts of his father. Kaikeyī then breaks to him the news of his father's death, attributing it to Śrī Rāma's exile and holding herself responsible for the latter, and after comforting him calls upon him to get himself installed on the throne after finishing his father's obsequies.

अपश्यंस्तु ततस्तत्र पितरं पितुरालये । जगाम भरतो द्रष्टुं मातरं मातुरालये ॥ १ ॥
अनुप्राप्तं तु तं दृष्ट्वा कैकेयी प्रोषितं सुतम् । उत्पपात तदा हृष्टा त्यक्त्वा सौवर्णमासनम् ॥ २ ॥
स प्रविश्यैव धर्मात्मा स्वगृहं श्रीविवर्जितम् । भरतः प्रेक्ष्य जग्राह जनन्याश्चरणौ शुभौ ॥ ३ ॥
तं मूर्ध्नि समुपाघ्राय परिष्वज्य यशस्विनम् । अङ्के भरतमारोप्य प्रष्टुं समुपचक्रमे ॥ ४ ॥
अद्य ते कतिचिद् रात्र्यश्च्युतस्यार्यकवेश्मनः । अपि नाध्वश्रमः शीघ्रं रथेनापततस्तव ॥ ५ ॥
आर्यकस्ते सुकुशली युधाजिन्मातुलस्तव । प्रवासाच्च सुखं पुत्र सर्वं मे वक्तुमर्हसि ॥ ६ ॥

Not finding his father in the latter's apartments in the palace, Bharata for his part then proceeded to see his mother in her apartments. (1) Rejoiced to see her aforesaid son, who had (long) been absent from home, returned, Kaikeyī for her part sprang on her feet at once, quitting her seat of gold. (2) Immediately on entering his (mother's) apartments and observing them completely shorn of splendour, the celebrated Bharata, whose mind was given to piety, clasped his mother's lovable feet. (3) Duly smelling his head (as a token of motherly affection) and embracing the illustrious Bharata and seating him on her lap, she coolly proceeded to question him (as follows):— (4) "How many nights have elapsed today since you departed from your maternal grandfather's abode and was not fatigue experienced by you in

the course of the (long and tedious) journey while you rode fast in your chariot ? (5) Is your maternal grandfather as well as your maternal uncle, Yudhājit, enjoying perfect health ? And has everything been well with you (ever) since you left home, my son ? You should tell me everything." (5-6)

एवं पृष्टस्तु कैकेय्या प्रियं पार्थिवनन्दनः । आचष्ट भरतः सर्वं मात्रे राजीवलोचनः ॥ ७ ॥
अद्य मे सप्तमी रात्रिश्च्युतस्यार्यकवेश्मनः । अम्बायाः कुशली तातो युधाजिन्मातुलश्च मे ॥ ८ ॥
यन्मे धनं च रत्नं च ददौ राजा परंतपः । परिश्रान्तं पथ्यभवत् ततोऽहं पूर्वमागतः ॥ ९ ॥
राजवाक्यहरैर्दूतैस्त्वर्यमाणोऽहमागतः । यदहं प्रष्टुमिच्छामि तदम्बा वक्तुमर्हति ॥ १० ॥
शून्योऽयं शयनीयस्ते पर्यङ्को हेमभूषितः । न चायमिक्ष्वाकुजनः प्रहृष्टः प्रतिभाति मे ॥ ११ ॥
राजा भवति भूयिष्ठमिहाम्बाया निवेशने । तमहं नाद्य पश्यामि द्रष्टुमिच्छन्निहागतः ॥ १२ ॥
पितुर्ग्रहीष्ये पादौ च तं ममाख्याहि पृच्छतः । आहोस्विदम्बाज्येष्ठायाः कौसल्याया निवेशने ॥ १३ ॥

Questioned thus in endearing terms by Kaikeyī, the lotus-eyed Prince Bharata, for his part, related to his mother everything (concerning himself). (7) (He said) "Today has elapsed the seventh night since I departed from the abode of my maternal grandfather. My maternal grandfather as well as my maternal uncle, Yudhājit, is enjoying good health. (8) The animals carrying the wealth (gold) and jewels that King Aśwapati (a tormentor of his enemies) gave (to me) got fatigued on the way; hence I came away first. (9) Being urged by the messengers, carrying the royal message, to hurry up, I came away (in advance). Be pleased, O mother, to tell me (now) what I intend to ask. (10) This couch of yours, fit for reposing on and plated with gold (as it is), is unoccupied (by the king, who used to grace it every now and then). These attendants of Daśaratha (a scion of Ikṣwāku) do not appear much delighted to me either. (11) The king used mostly to be present here in your apartments. Though I have come here longing to see him, I do not see him today. (12) Nay, I shall clasp the feet of my father: (pray) tell me, (even) as I ask you, where he may be. Is he in the apartments of Kausalyā, the seniormost of my mothers ?" (13)

तं प्रत्युवाच कैकेयी प्रियवद् घोरमप्रियम् । अजानन्तं प्रजानन्ती राज्यलोभेन मोहिता ॥ १४ ॥
या गतिः सर्वभूतानां तां गतिं ते पिता गतः । राजा महात्मा तेजस्वी यायजूकः सतां गतिः ॥ १५ ॥
तच्छ्रुत्वा भरतो वाक्यं धर्माभिजनवाञ्छुचिः । पपात सहसा भूमौ पितृशोकबलार्दितः ॥ १६ ॥
हा हतोऽस्मीति कृपणां दीनां वाचमुदीरयन् । निपपात महाबाहुर्बाहू विक्षिप्य वीर्यवान् ॥ १७ ॥
ततः शोकेन संवीतः पितुर्मरणदुःखितः । विललाप महातेजा भ्रान्ताकुलितचेतनः ॥ १८ ॥
एतत् सुरुचिरं भाति पितुर्मे शयनं पुरा । शशिनेवामलं रात्रौ गगनं तोयदात्यये ॥ १९ ॥
तदिदं न विभात्यद्य विहीनं तेन धीमता । व्योमेव शशिना हीनमप्शुष्क इव सागरः ॥ २० ॥
बाष्पमुत्सृज्य कण्ठेन स्वात्मना परिपीडितः । प्रच्छाद्य वदनं श्रीमद् वस्त्रेण जयतां वरः ॥ २१ ॥

Infatuated by greed of sovereignty, Kaikeyī, who knew everything in detail, related to Bharata, who knew nothing (about it), the whole thing, which was (so) terrible and unpleasant, as though it were agreeable (to hear):—(14) "The high-souled and glorious king, your father, who was given to the performance of sacrifices and was the haven of the virtuous, has met the same fate as is the destined end of all created beings." (15) Hearing the aforesaid

reply (from the lips of Kaikeyī), the guileless Bharata, who came of a pious family, fell to the ground all at once, hard smitten with grief caused by the death of his father. (16) Uttering in piteous tones the plaintive words "Alas, I am ruined !" and striking his arms against the floor, the heroic Bharata (who possessed long arms) fell prostrate. (17) Overwhelmed with grief and distressed over the death of his father, Bharata (who was endowed with great glory) then lamented (in the following words), his mind being confused and agitated (through grief):—(18) "This couch of my father looked most charming before like a clear sky adorned with the moon on an autumnal night (19) Devoid of that sagacious king (however), the same couch does not shine brightly today any more than a moonless sky or a sea whose water has been dried up (by the fire of universal dissolution)." (20) Shedding tears with a sound (expressive of anguish) from his throat, and covering his charming face with a cloth, Bharata (the foremost of victorious men), who felt greatly troubled in his own mind, continued to wail. (21)

तमार्तं देवसंकाशं समीक्ष्य पतितं भुवि । निकृत्तमिव सालस्य स्कन्धं परशुना वने ॥ २२ ॥
माता मातङ्गसंकाशं चन्द्रार्कसदृशं सुतम् । उत्थापयित्वा शोकार्तं वचनं चेदमब्रवीत् ॥ २३ ॥
उत्तिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ किं शेषे राजन्नत्र महायशः । त्वद्विधा नहि शोचन्ति सन्तः सदसि सम्मताः ॥ २४ ॥
दानयज्ञाधिकारा हि शीलश्रुतितपोऽनुगा । बुद्धिस्ते बुद्धिसम्पन्न प्रभेवार्कस्य मन्दिरे ॥ २५ ॥

Perceiving her aforesaid son, shining brightly like a god,—who closely resembled (the young of) an elephant and vied with the moon and the sun (in splendour) and felt stricken with grief, fallen in a wretched plight on the ground like a bough of a sal severed with an axe in a forest,—and lifting him, the mother (Kaikeyī) spoke to him as follows:— (22-23) "Get up, O king ! Rise, O highly illustrious one ! Wherefore are you lying down here (on the ground) ? Virtuous souls like you, honoured in an assembly (of men), do not grieve. (24) Your mind, O prince richly endowed with intelligence,—which is (ever) devoted to charity and sacrificial performances and which pursues right conduct,—follows (the injunctions of) the Vedas, and is prone to austerities,— is steady as the radiance of the sun is fixed in the orb of the sun." (25)

स रुदित्वा चिरं कालं भूमौ परिविवृत्य च । जननीं प्रत्युवाचेदं शोकैर्बहुभिरावृतः ॥ २६ ॥
अभिषेक्ष्यति रामं तु राजा यज्ञं नु यक्ष्यते । इत्यहं कृतसंकल्पो हृष्टो यात्रामयासिषम् ॥ २७ ॥
तदिदं ह्यन्यथाभूतं व्यवदीर्णं मनो मम । पितरं यो न पश्यामि नित्यं प्रियहिते रतम् ॥ २८ ॥
अम्ब केनात्यगाद् राजा व्याधिना मय्यनागते । धन्या रामादयः सर्वे यैः पिता संस्कृतः स्वयम् ॥ २९ ॥
न नूनं मां महाराजः प्राप्तं जानाति कीर्तिमान् । उपजिघ्रेत् तु मां मूर्ध्नि तातः संनाम्य सत्वरम् ॥ ३० ॥
क्व स पाणिः सुखस्पर्शस्तातस्याक्लिष्टकर्मणः । यो हि मां रजसा ध्वस्तमभीक्ष्णं परिमार्जति ॥ ३१ ॥
यो मे भ्राता पिता बन्धुर्यस्य दासोऽस्मि सम्मतः । तस्य मां शीघ्रमाख्याहि रामस्याक्लिष्टकर्मणः ॥ ३२ ॥
पिता हि भवति ज्येष्ठो धर्ममार्यस्य जानतः । तस्य पादौ ग्रहीष्यामि स हीदानीं गतिर्मम ॥ ३३ ॥
धर्मविद् धर्मशीलश्च महाभागो दृढव्रतः । आर्ये किमब्रवीद् राजा पिता मे सत्यविक्रमः ॥ ३४ ॥
पश्चिमं साधुसंदेशमिच्छामि श्रोतुमात्मनः ।

Weeping for a long time and rolling on the floor, Bharata, who was filled with many-sided grief, replied to his mother as follows:—(26) "Having arrived at the conclusion that the king will most probably install Śrī

Rāma (as Prince Regent) or perform a sacrifice, I gladly undertook the journey (to Ayodhya). (27) Indeed that calculation (of mine) has come to be incorrect, (and) my mind is torn (with anguish) in that I do not behold my father, who was ever intent on doing kind acts to me and devoted to my good (28) Of what disease did the king die before I arrived, O mother ? (How) fortunate are Śrī Rāma and all others, by whom father was cremated with their own hands ! (29) Surely the illustrious emperor does not know me to have come (home). Otherwise, pressing me down, father would have quickly smelt my head (as a token of affection). (30) Where is that hand, agreeable to the touch, of my father,—who did (great) things without (much) exertion,—that would wipe me again and again when he found me soiled with dust. (31) (Pray) announce me soon to Śrī Rāma, who is unwearied in action, (nay) who is my (elder) brother, father (in the absence of the emperor) and friend (all in one), and whose beloved servant I am. (32) To a worthy man knowing what is right, an elder brother is a virtual father. I shall clasp his feet (as a mark of respect) since he is my support now. (33) What did the king, my father, of firm resolve and unfailing prowess,—who knew what is right, had a virtuous disposition and was highly fortunate,—say to my elder brother (at the last moment) ? (34) I wish to hear his last kind message for me."

इति पृष्टा यथातत्त्वं कैकेयी वाक्यमब्रवीत् ॥ ३५ ॥
रामेति राजा विलपन् हा सीते लक्ष्मणेति च । स महात्मा परं लोकं गतो मतिमतां वरः ॥ ३६ ॥
इतीमां पश्चिमां वाचं व्याजहार पिता तव । कालधर्मपरिक्षिप्तः पाशैरिव महागजः ॥ ३७ ॥
सिद्धार्थास्तु नरा राममागतं सह सीतया । लक्ष्मणं च महाबाहुं द्रक्ष्यन्ति पुनरागतम् ॥ ३८ ॥
तच्छ्रुत्वा विषसादैव द्वितीयाप्रियशंसनात् । विषण्णवदनो भूत्वा भूयः पप्रच्छ मातरम् ॥ ३९ ॥
क्व चेदानीं स धर्मात्मा कौसल्यानन्दवर्धनः । लक्ष्मणेन सह भ्रात्रा सीतया च समागतः ॥ ४० ॥
तथा पृष्टा यथान्यायमाख्यातुमुपचक्रमे । मातास्य युगपद्वाक्यं विप्रियं प्रियशंसया ॥ ४१ ॥
स हि राजसुतः पुत्र चीरवासा महावनम् । दण्डकान् सह वैदेह्या लक्ष्मणानुचरो गतः ॥ ४२ ॥
तच्छ्रुत्वा भरतस्त्रस्तो भ्रातुश्चारित्रशङ्कया । स्वस्य वंशस्य माहात्म्यात् प्रष्टुं समुपचक्रमे ॥ ४३ ॥
कच्चिन्न ब्राह्मणधनं हृतं रामेण कस्यचित् । कच्चिन्नाढ्यो दरिद्रो वा तेनापापो विहिंसितः ॥ ४४ ॥
कच्चिन्न परदारान् वा राजपुत्रोऽभिमन्यते । कस्मात् स दण्डकारण्ये भ्राता रामो विवासितः ॥ ४५ ॥

Questioned thus, Kaikeyī replied as follows (strictly) in consonance with facts:—(35) "That high-souled monarch, the foremost among the wise, departed for the other world crying 'O Rāma, oh Sītā, O Lakṣmaṇa !!!' (36) Bound by the laws of Time (according to which a living being meets his end at the appointed time), like a huge elephant bound with ropes, your father uttered the following parting words:—(37) 'Only those men who (are able to) behold Rāma returned with Sītā, as also the mighty-armed Lakṣmaṇa come back (to Ayodhya) will have their object accomplished.' " (38) Hearing the aforesaid report, the prince grew melancholy at that other unpleasant tidings and, assuming a dejected look, further questioned his mother (as follows):—(39) "Where is Śrī Rāma, whose mind is given to virtue and who enhances the joy of Kausalyā, now, conjoined with brother Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā ?" (40) Questioned as aforesaid, his mother began duly to relate (as follows) the unpleasant event simultaneously with the news

of his father's demise in the tone of breaking a welcome news:—(41) "Actually clad in the bark of trees, my son, and followed by Lakṣmaṇa, the aforesaid prince proceeded to the great forest of Daṇḍaka with Sītā (a princess of the Videha territory)." (42) Filled with apprehension to hear the tidings because of his misgivings about the character of his (elder) brother (Śrī Rāma), and remembering as he did the greatness of his (royal) house, Bharata commenced interrogating her (as follows):—(43) "I hope no property of a Brahman was (wantonly) seized by Śrī Rāma. I am sure no sinless man, whether wealthy or destitute, was killed by him. (44) Nor did the prince long for another's wife, I am sure. (If not), wherefore was my celebrated brother sent into exile to the Daṇḍaka forest ?" (45)

अथास्य चपला माता तत् स्वकर्म यथातथम् । तेनैव स्त्रीस्वभावेन व्याहर्तुमुपचक्रमे ॥ ४६ ॥
एवमुक्ता तु कैकेयी भरतेन महात्मना । उवाच वचनं हृष्टा वृथापण्डितमानिनी ॥ ४७ ॥
न ब्राह्मणधनं किंचिद्धृतं रामेण कस्यचित् ।
कश्चिन्नाढ्यो दरिद्रो वा तेनापापो विहिंसितः । न रामः परदारान् स चक्षुर्भ्यामपि पश्यति ॥ ४८ ॥
मया तु पुत्र श्रुत्वैव रामस्येहाभिषेचनम् । याचितस्ते पिता राज्यं रामस्य च विवासनम् ॥ ४९ ॥
स स्ववृत्तिं समास्थाय पिता ते तत् तथाकरोत् । रामस्तु सहसौमित्रिः प्रेषितः सह सीतया ॥ ५० ॥
तमपश्यन् प्रियं पुत्रं महीपालो महायशाः । पुत्रशोकपरिद्यूनः पञ्चत्वमुपपेदिवान् ॥ ५१ ॥
त्वया त्विदानीं धर्मज्ञ राजत्वमवलम्ब्यताम् । त्वत्कृते हि मया सर्वमिदमेवंविधं कृतम् ॥ ५२ ॥
मा शोकं मा च संतापं धैर्यमाश्रय पुत्रक । त्वदधीना हि नगरी राज्यं चैतदनामयम् ॥ ५३ ॥
तत् पुत्र शीघ्रं विधिना विधिज्ञैर्वसिष्ठमुख्यैः सहितो द्विजेन्द्रैः ।
संकाल्य राजानमदीनसत्त्वमात्मानमुर्व्यामभिषेचयस्व ॥ ५४ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे द्विसप्ततितमः सर्गः ॥ ७२ ॥

Prompted by her feminine (frivolous) nature, which was too well-known, Bharata's capricious mother forthwith began to recount her notorious doing (precisely) as matters stood. (46) Questioned as aforesaid by the high-souled Bharata, Kaikeyī, for her part, who vainly accounted her wise, merrily replied as follows:—(47) "No property whatsoever of a Brahman or anyone (else) was (wantonly) seized by Rāma nor was any innocent man, wealthy or destitute, killed by him. Nor did the celebrated Rāma look on another's wife even with sinless eyes. (48) The moment I heard of Rāma's installation (as Prince Regent) on the throne of Ayodhya, my son, your father was in fact asked by me for the sovereignty (of Ayodhya in your favour) and the banishment of Rāma. (49) Following his own (truthful) nature, your father thereupon did as he was asked (by me). Accompanied by Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma was accordingly sent into exile along with Sītā. (50) Missing his beloved son (Rāma), and stricken with grief over his separation from that son, the highly illustrious emperor met his end. (51) Let the throne (of Ayodhya) be accepted by you now, O knower of what is right ! Indeed all this has been manipulated by me in this wise for your sake. (52) Do not yield to grief nor to remorse, my dear son, but have recourse to firmness. Indeed (the existence of) the city (of Ayodhya) as well as this kingdom, which is free from trouble, is dependent on you. (53) Therefore, speedily performing with due ceremony the funeral rites with respect to the king (your

deceased father) with the help of the foremost of Brahmans well-versed in the scriptural ordinance, get yourself installed, my son, as the ruler of the (entire) globe, undepressed in spirits. (54)

Thus ends Canto Seventy-two in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

त्रिसप्ततितमः सर्गः

Canto LXXIII

Bitterly reproaching Kaikeyī in many ways, and cutting her to the quick by his caustic remarks, Bharata takes a vow before her to bring back Śrī Rāma from the forest, install him on the throne of Ayodhya and wait upon him as an attendant to offend her.

श्रुत्वा च स पितुर्वृत्तं भ्रातरौ च विवासितौ । भरतो दुःखसंतप्त इदं वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ १ ॥
किं नु कार्यं हतस्येह मम राज्येन शोचतः । विहीनस्याथ पित्रा च भ्रात्रा पितृसमेन च ॥ २ ॥
दुःखे मे दुःखमकरोर्व्रणे क्षारमिवाददाः । राजानं प्रेतभावस्थं कृत्वा रामं च तापसम् ॥ ३ ॥
कुलस्य त्वमभावाय कालरात्रिरिवागता । अङ्गारमुपगुह्य स्म पिता मे नावबुद्धवान् ॥ ४ ॥
मृत्युमापादितो राजा त्वया मे पापदर्शिनि । सुखं परिहृतं मोहात् कुलेऽस्मिन् कुलपांसनि ॥ ५ ॥
त्वां प्राप्य हि पिता मेऽद्य सत्यसंधो महायशाः । तीव्रदुःखाभिसंतप्तो वृत्तो दशरथो नृपः ॥ ६ ॥
विनाशितो महाराजः पिता मे धर्मवत्सलः । कस्मात् प्रव्राजितो रामः कस्मादेव वनं गतः ॥ ७ ॥

Sore stricken with sorrow to hear the (unwelcome) news about his father, as well as of his brothers (Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa) having been sent into exile, Bharata replied as follows.—(1) "What object on earth will possibly be gained through sovereignty by me, a wretched being, deprived of his father and (elder) brother,—who was as good as a father,— and (therefore) grieving ? (2) Reducing the king to the state of a departed soul and turning Śrī Rāma an ascetic (on top of it), you have brought calamity after calamity to me—rubbed salt as it were into my wound. (3) Like the night of universal dissolution (or Goddess Kālarātri, one of the nine Durgās or manifestations of the Divine Energy associated with the dissolution of the universe), you made your appearance (in my father's house) for the extermination of my race ! (Even) on clasping a live coal to his bosom my father did not recognize it (as such). (4) The king, my father, has been consigned to death by you, O woman who perceive evil (even where there is none) and have brought disgrace to your family ! Through infatuation the joy of this family has been taken away by you. (5) Indeed having got you (for his wife) my highly illustrious father, King Daśaratha, who was true to his promise and was sore stricken with acute agony (born of separation from his eldest son) has passed away. (6) Wherefore was the emperor, my father, who was (so) lovingly devoted to duty, deprived of his life by you ? For what precise reason was Śrī Rāma sent into exile and proceeded to the forest ? (7)

कौसल्या च सुमित्रा च पुत्रशोकाभिपीडिते । दुष्करं यदि जीवेतां प्राप्य त्वां जननीं मम ॥ ८ ॥
नन्वार्योऽपि च धर्मात्मा त्वयि वृत्तिमनुत्तमाम् । वर्तते गुरुवृत्तिज्ञो यथा मातरि वर्तते ॥ ९ ॥
तथा ज्येष्ठा हि मे माता कौसल्या दीर्घदर्शिनी । त्वयि धर्मं समास्थाय भगिन्यामिव वर्तते ॥ १० ॥
तस्याः पुत्रं महात्मानं चीरवल्कलवाससम् । प्रस्थाप्य वनवासाय कथं पापे न शोचसे ॥ ११ ॥
अपापदर्शिनं शूरं कृतात्मानं यशस्विनम् । प्रव्राज्य चीरवसनं किं नु पश्यसि कारणम् ॥ १२ ॥
लुब्धाया विदितो मन्ये न तेऽहं राघवं यथा । तथा ह्यनर्थो राज्यार्थं त्वयाऽऽनीतो महानयम् ॥ १३ ॥
अहं हि पुरुषव्याघ्रावपश्यन् रामलक्ष्मणौ । केन शक्तिप्रभावेण राज्यं रक्षितुमुत्सहे ॥ १४ ॥

"Having got you, my mother (for their co-wife), Kausalyā and Sumitrā too have been tormented with grief caused by separation from their (own) son. They would (indeed) accomplish something hard to accomplish if they survived (any longer). (8) Surely my elder brother (Śrī Rāma) too, whose mind is given to piety and who knows (full well) how to serve his elders, rendered the best services to you as he did to his (own) mother! (9) Even so my seniormost mother, Kausalyā, who takes a long-range view of things, behaved towards you as towards her (own) sister, following (as she does) the principles of right conduct. (10) Having sent her high-souled son, clad in tatters and the bark of trees, into exile in a forest, wherefore do you not grieve, O sinful woman? (11) Having sent into exile, clad in the bark of trees, the illustrious hero who never detected others' sin and had mastered his self, what gain on earth do you expect? (12) To you, who are full of greed (for power and pelf), I am not known I believe, in my reality as to how devoted I am to Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu). That is why this great tragedy has been enacted by you for the sake of sovereignty. (13) Failing to perceive the two tigers among men, Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, by virtue of what strength can I venture to protect the kingdom (of Ayodhya)? (14)

तं हि नित्यं महाराजो बलवन्तं महौजसम् । उपाश्रितोऽभूद् धर्मात्मा मेरुर्मेरुवनं यथा ॥ १५ ॥
सोऽहं कथमिमं भारं महाधुर्यसमुद्यतम् । दम्यो धुरमिवासाद्य सहेयं केन चौजसा ॥ १६ ॥
अथवा मे भवेच्छक्तिर्योगैर्बुद्धिबलेन वा । सकामां न करिष्यामि त्वामहं पुत्रगर्द्धिनीम् ॥ १७ ॥
न मे विकाङ्क्षा जायेत त्यक्तुं त्वां पापनिश्चयाम् । यदि रामस्य नावेक्षा त्वयि स्यान्मातृवत् सदा ॥ १८ ॥
उत्पन्ना तु कथं बुद्धिस्तवेयं पापदर्शिनी । साधुचारित्रविभ्रष्टे पूर्वेषां नो विगर्हिता ॥ १९ ॥
अस्मिन् कुले हि सर्वेषां ज्येष्ठो राज्येऽभिषिच्यते । अपरे भ्रातरस्तस्मिन् प्रवर्तन्ते समाहिताः ॥ २० ॥
नहि मन्ये नृशंसे त्वं राजधर्ममवेक्षसे । गतिं वा न विजानासि राजवृत्तस्य शाश्वतीम् ॥ २१ ॥

"Even the emperor, whose mind was given to piety, ever depended on (the might of) the powerful Śrī Rāma,—who is possessed of extraordinary strength,—(just) as Mount Meru depends (for its protection against inroads) on the forest grown on it. (15) How and with what stamina shall I, whose only strength is Śrī Rāma, sustain this burden (of kingship) any more than a calf would stand the strain on getting a load, borne with ease by a giant bull? (16) Or (even) if such capacity could be brought out in me through contrivances or through intellectual calibre, I shall never allow you to attain your desired end,—you, who covet sovereignty for your son (*i. e.*, myself). (17) No disinclination would be felt by me (even) in

deserting you, a woman of sinful resolve, if Śrī Rāma did not regard you as a mother at all times. (18) How did this idea (of securing the kingdom for a younger brother in supersession of the eldest),—an idea which contemplates evil (in relation to others) and which has been severely condemned by our forbears,—enter your mind at all, O woman fallen from virtuous conduct ? (19) Indeed in our house the eldest* of all (brothers) is installed (on the throne). The other brothers devoutly obey him. (20) I believe you do not at all respect the moral code prescribed for kings nor do you know the eternal way of life of kings, O cruel woman ! (21)

सततं राजपुत्रेषु ज्येष्ठो राजाभिषिच्यते । राज्ञामेतत् समं तत् स्यादिक्ष्वाकूणां विशेषतः ॥ २२ ॥
तेषां धर्मैकरक्षाणां कुलचारित्रशोभिनाम् । अद्य चारित्रशौटीर्यं त्वां प्राप्य विनिवर्तितम् ॥ २३ ॥
तवापि सुमहाभागे जनेन्द्रकुलपूर्वके । बुद्धिमोहः कथमयं सम्भूतस्त्वयि गर्हितः ॥ २४ ॥
न तु कामं करिष्यामि तवाहं पापनिश्चये । यया व्यसनमारब्धं जीवितान्तकरं मम ॥ २५ ॥
एष त्विदानीमेवाहमप्रियार्थं तवानघम् । निवर्तयिष्यामि वनाद् भ्रातरं स्वजनप्रियम् ॥ २६ ॥
निवर्तयित्वा रामं च तस्याहं दीप्ततेजसः । दासभूतो भविष्यामि सुस्थितेनान्तरात्मना ॥ २७ ॥
इत्येवमुक्त्वा भरतो महात्मा प्रियेतरैर्वाक्यगणैस्तुदंस्ताम् ।
शोकार्दितश्चापि ननाद भूयः सिंहो यथा मन्दरकन्दरस्थः ॥ २८ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे त्रिसप्ततितमः सर्गः ॥ ७३ ॥

"Among the sons of a king the eldest (alone) is invariably crowned king. This is a common practice among (all) kings, and it is particularly true of the Ikṣwākus. (22) The self-esteem, born of (loftiness of) character, cherished by the aforesaid kings,—who were protected by their righteousness alone and who shone by virtue of a mode of life befitting their race,—has disappeared today on coming to be associated with you. (23) How has this perversity of reason, contemptible for you, appeared in you too, O exceptionally blessed lady, born of a royal lineage ! (24) I will not in any case accomplish your desired object, O woman of sinful resolve, since a calamity which may (eventually) prove fatal to me, has been set on foot by you. (25) In order to give offence to you I shall, however, forthwith cause to return from the forest my sinless (elder) brother (Śrī Rāma), the beloved of his people. (26) Nay, having caused Śrī Rāma to return (from the forest) I shall settle down (in life) with a composed mind, turning a servant of the aforesaid prince of effulgent glory." (27) Having spoken as aforesaid (to his mother), pricking her once more with volleys of piercing words, the high-souled Bharata, even though tormented with grief, roared like a lion ensconced in a cave of Mount Mandara. (28)

Thus ends Canto Seventy-three in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

* This is fully supported by Manu, who says:—

ज्येष्ठ एव तु गृह्णीयात्सकलं पैतृकं धनम् । अन्ये तमनुजीवेयुर्यथैव पितरं तथा ॥

"The eldest son alone should inherit the entire property of his father. Others should depend on him as they did on their father (heretofore)."

चतुःसप्ततितमः सर्गः

Canto LXXIV

Severely reproaching his mother once more, and making up his mind not only to bring back Śrī Rāma from the forest and crown him king but also to go into exile for fourteen years in order to redeem his elder brother's vow, Bharata, who is filled with rage at the thought of the mischief wrought by his mother, cannot contain his grief and falls unconscious to the ground.

तां तथा गर्हयित्वा तु मातरं भरतस्तदा । रोषेण महताऽऽविष्टः पुनरेवाब्रवीद् वचः ॥ १ ॥
राज्याद् भ्रंशस्व कैकेयि नृशंसे दुष्टचारिणि । परित्यक्तासि धर्मेण मा मृतं रुदती भव ॥ २ ॥
किं नु तेऽदूषयद् रामो राजा वा भृशधार्मिकः । ययोर्मृत्युर्विवासश्च त्वत्कृते तुल्यमागतौ ॥ ३ ॥
भ्रूणहत्यामसि प्राप्ता कुलस्यास्य विनाशनात् । कैकेयि नरकं गच्छ मा च तातसलोकताम् ॥ ४ ॥
यत्त्वया हीदृशं पापं कृतं घोरेण कर्मणा । सर्वलोकप्रियं हित्वा ममाप्यापादितं भयम् ॥ ५ ॥
त्वत्कृते मे पिता वृत्तो रामश्चारण्यमाश्रितः । अयशो जीवलोके च त्वयाहं प्रतिपादितः ॥ ६ ॥

Having reproached his mother, Kaikeyī, as aforesaid on that occasion, Bharata, for his part, who was filled with violent anger, spoke once more as follows:—(1) "Be deprived of sovereignty, O cruel Kaikeyī of vicious conduct ! Since you have been forsaken by virtue, keep wailing (for life) taking me to be dead (since the course you have adopted is bound to prove fatal to me). (2) What interest of yours, I wonder, did Śrī Rāma or the exceedingly pious king mar, whose banishment and death (severally) came about at one and the same time because of you ? (3) By having brought destruction to this family you have incurred the sin of having killed a Brahman studying the Veda. Proceed you (therefore) to hell (after death), O Kaikeyī, and not to heaven in common with my father (your husband, the virtuous King Daśaratha). (4) Since such a (gross) sin has been incurred by you through a terrible act (in the form of taking the life of a pious husband and sending into exile a loving and virtuous son), peril (of being disowned by my loving brother) has been brought by you to me as well by banishing a prince who is the beloved of all people. (5) Because of you my father has joined the majority, while Śrī Rāma has taken up his abode in the forest, and I too have been subjected to ignominy in the world of mortals by you. (6)

मातृरूपे ममामित्रे नृशंसे राज्यकामुके । न तेऽहमभिभाष्योऽस्मि दुर्वृत्ते पतिघातिनि ॥ ७ ॥
कौसल्या च सुमित्रा च याश्चान्या मम मातरः । दुःखेन महताऽऽविष्टास्त्वां प्राप्य कुलदूषिणीम् ॥ ८ ॥
न त्वमश्वपतेः कन्या धर्मराजस्य धीमतः । राक्षसी तत्र जातासि कुलप्रध्वंसिनी पितुः ॥ ९ ॥
यत् त्वया धार्मिको रामो नित्यं सत्यपरायणः । वनं प्रस्थापितो वीरः पितापि त्रिदिवं गतः ॥ १० ॥
यत्प्रधानासि तत् पापं मयि पित्रा विना कृते । भ्रातृभ्यां च परित्यक्ते सर्वलोकस्य चाप्रिये ॥ ११ ॥
कौसल्यां धर्मसंयुक्तां वियुक्तां पापनिश्चये । कृत्वा कं प्राप्स्यसे ह्यद्य लोकं निरयगामिनि ॥ १२ ॥

"I ought not to be spoken to by you, O cruel woman of evil conduct and covetous of sovereignty, who have killed your (own) husband and are my enemy in the guise of a mother! (7) Having got you, the disgrace of your family, (for a co-wife), Kausalyā and Sumitrā and my other (step-) mothers too have been filled with great agony. (8) (Surely) you are not the daughter of the virtuous and wise King Aświapati, but an ogress sprung from his loins, who has brought complete ruin to my father's race. (9) Since the virtuous hero, Śrī Rāma, who is ever devoted to truth, has been sent into exile to the forest by you and my father too has departed for heaven because of you, the sin that has been chiefly incurred by you thereby has been visited on me, who have (consequently) been deprived of my father, nay, abandoned by my brothers (Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa) and have become unpopular with the whole world. (10-11) Indeed, having rendered Kausalyā, who is wedded to piety, desolate (by depriving her of her husband and only son), O woman of sinful resolve and doomed to perdition, what realm (other than the infernal regions) will you attain now (after death)? (12)

किं नावबुध्यसे क्रूरे नियतं बन्धुसंश्रयम् । ज्येष्ठं पितृसमं रामं कौसल्यायात्मसम्भवम् ॥ १३ ॥
अङ्गप्रत्यङ्गजः पुत्रो हृदयाच्चाभिजायते । तस्मात् प्रियतरो मातुः प्रिया एव तु बान्धवाः ॥ १४ ॥
अन्यदा किल धर्मज्ञा सुरभिः सुरसम्मता । वहमानौ ददर्शोर्व्यां पुत्रौ विगतचेतसौ ॥ १५ ॥
तावर्धदिवसं श्रान्तौ दृष्ट्वा पुत्रौ महीतले । रुरोद पुत्रशोकेन बाष्पपर्याकुलेक्षणम् ॥ १६ ॥
अधस्ताद् व्रजतस्तस्याः सुरराज्ञो महात्मनः । बिन्दवः पतिता गात्रे सूक्ष्माः सुरभिगन्धिनः ॥ १७ ॥
निरीक्षमाणस्तां शक्रो ददर्श सुरभिं स्थिताम् । आकाशे विष्ठितां दीनां रुदतीं भृशदुःखिताम् ॥ १८ ॥

"Did you not cognize Śrī Rāma, born of Kausalyā's own womb, to be my eldest brother and (therefore) as good as my father, self-controlled and the asylum of his kinsfolk, O cruel woman? (13) A son takes his shape from (the essence of) the various primary and secondary limbs of his father (in the form of his generative fluid) and the heart of his mother (which is the fount of her ovum). Hence he is dearer (than all others) to his mother, whereas her (other) relations are simply dear (to her). (14) On one occasion (in the hoary past), so the tradition goes, Surabhi (the cow of plenty), who knows what is right and is adored by gods, saw a pair of bullocks (her own sons) fallen unconscious on the ground while drawing the plough. (15) Seeing her two sons lying on the ground exhausted due to their having toiled (hard) for half the day, Surabhi wept for grief born of anxiety for her sons, her eyes blinded with tears. (16) Her sweet-scented tear-drops fell on the person of the high-souled Indra, (the ruler of gods), who happened to pass below. (17) Looking upwards Indra beheld the said Surabhi standing weeping in the heavens in a miserable plight, sore afflicted. (18)

तां दृष्ट्वा शोकसंतप्तां वज्रपाणिर्यशस्विनीम् । इन्द्रः प्राञ्जलिरुद्विग्नः सुरराजोऽब्रवीद् वचः ॥ १९ ॥
भयं कच्चिन्न चास्मासु कुतश्चिद् विद्यते महत् । कुतोनिमित्तः शोकस्ते ब्रूहि सर्वहितैषिणि ॥ २० ॥
एवमुक्ता तु सुरभिः सुरराजेन धीमता । प्रत्युवाच ततो धीरा वाक्यं वाक्यविशारदा ॥ २१ ॥
शान्तं पापं न वः किंचित् कुतश्चिदमराधिप । अहं तु मग्नौ शोचामि स्वपुत्रौ विषमे स्थितौ ॥ २२ ॥
एतौ दृष्ट्वा कृशौ दीनौ सूर्यरश्मिप्रतापितौ । वध्यमानौ बलीवर्दौ कर्षकेण दुरात्मना ॥ २३ ॥
मम कायात् प्रसूतौ हि दुःखितौ भारपीडितौ । यौ दृष्ट्वा परितप्येऽहं नास्ति पुत्रसमः प्रियः ॥ २४ ॥

"Perturbed to find the illustrious cow agonized through grief, Indra, the ruler of gods, who carried a thunderbolt in one of his hands, spoke with joined palms as follows:—(19) 'I hope there is no grave danger to us (heavenly beings) from any quarter (whatsoever). Now tell me, O well-wisher of all, what is the occasion for your grief ?' (20) Addressed in the afore said words by the wise Indra (the ruler of gods), the intelligent Surabhi for her part, who was adept in speaking, forthwith replied (in the following words):—(21) 'Heaven forbid ! There is no danger whatsoever to you from any quarter, O ruler of immortals ! I, however, grieve to see plunged in adversity a pair of bullocks, my own progeny, emaciated and miserable, scorched by the sun's rays and (on top of it) being beaten by an evil-minded farmer. (22-23) I feel sore distressed to find the two bullocks, who are sprung from my own womb, afflicted and oppressed with a (heavy) load; for there is none so dear (to a mother) as a son.' (24)

यस्याः पुत्रसहस्रैस्तु कृत्स्नं व्याप्तमिदं जगत् । तां दृष्ट्वा रुदतीं शक्रो न सुतान्मन्यते परम् ॥ २५ ॥
इन्द्रो ह्यश्रुनिपातं तं स्वगात्रे पुण्यगन्धिनम् । सुरभिं मन्यते दृष्ट्वा भूयसीं तामिहेश्वरः ॥ २६ ॥
समाप्रतिमवृत्ताया लोकधारणकाम्यया । श्रीमत्या गुणमुख्यायाः स्वभावपरिचेष्टया ॥ २७ ॥
यस्याः पुत्रसहस्राणि सापि शोचति कामधुक् । किं पुनर्या विना रामं कौसल्या वर्तयिष्यति ॥ २८ ॥
एकपुत्रा च साध्वी च विवत्सेयं त्वया कृता । तस्मात् त्वं सततं दुःखं प्रेत्य चेह च लप्स्यसे ॥ २९ ॥
अहं त्वपचितिं भ्रातुः पितुश्च सकलामिमाम् । वर्धनं यशसश्चापि करिष्यामि न संशयः ॥ ३० ॥

"Seeing Surabhi,—by whose countless offsprings (in the shape of the bovine race) the whole creation is filled,—weeping, Indra reckoned none as dearer (to a mother) than a son. (25) Perceiving that dropping of tears, which emitted a sweet odour, (from the eyes of Surabhi) on his own person, the powerful Indra recognized the said Surabhi to be the greatest (of all) in this world. (26) When even the celebrated cow of plenty—whose conduct (in the world) is uniformly beneficent to all and is without parallel (in this respect), actuated as she is by the desire to sustain the world, (nay) who is rich in the power to grant the desire of all (whosoever approaches her) and is foremost in her virtue (of truthfulness etc.) and who is blessed with numberless offsprings—grieves (for them) as an outward expression of her natural love (for her progeny), how much more will Kausalyā, who will (have to) drag her existence without Śrī Rāma (her only son) ? (27-28) Kausalyā, who is blessed with one son (only) and is a virtuous lady to boot, has been deprived of her son by you. Hence you will incessantly undergo suffering here as well as after death. (29) I for my part shall offer worship as follows (in the form of bringing him back from the forest and restoring his patrimony to him) to my (elder) brother (Śrī Rāma) and entire worship (in the form of all obsequial rites) to my father and also enhance their reputation: there is no doubt about it. (30)

आनाय्य च महाबाहुं कोसलेन्द्रं महाबलम् । स्वयमेव प्रवेक्ष्यामि वनं मुनिनिषेवितम् ॥ ३१ ॥
नह्यहं पापसंकल्पे पापे पापं त्वया कृतम् । शक्तो धारयितुं पौरैरश्रुकण्ठैर्निरीक्षितः ॥ ३२ ॥
सा त्वमग्निं प्रविश वा स्वयं वा विश दण्डकान् । रज्जुं बद्ध्वाथवा कण्ठे नहि तेऽन्यत् परायणम् ॥ ३३ ॥
अहमप्यवनीं प्राप्ते रामे सत्यपराक्रमे । कृतकृत्यो भविष्यामि विप्रवासितकल्मषः ॥ ३४ ॥
इति नाग इवारण्ये तोमराङ्कुशतोदितः । पपात भुवि संक्रुद्धो निःश्वसन्निव पन्नगः ॥ ३५ ॥

संरक्तनेत्रः शिथिलाम्बरस्तथा विधूतसर्वाभरणः परंतपः ।
बभूव भूमौ पतितो नृपात्मजः शचीपतेः केतुरिवोत्सवक्षये ॥ ३६ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे चतुस्सप्ततितमः सर्गः ॥ ७४ ॥

"Having caused Śrī Rāma (the ruler of the kingdom of Kosala)—who is distinguished by long arms and is possessed of great might—to return (to Ayodhya), I shall myself retire (in his place) to the forest frequented by hermits (and thus save him from the sin of having violated his vow). (31) Looked on by the citizens with their throat full of tears, I shall surely not be able to brook the sin perpetrated by you (in the shape of sending the eldest brother into exile and securing the kingdom in favour of a younger one), O wicked woman of sinful resolve ! (32) Having deliberately committed this sin, enter you the fire or retire yourself to the Daṇḍaka forest or (again) end your life by tying a cord round your neck (and throttling yourself): there is no other course left for you. (33) I too shall have washed my stain and accomplished my purpose (only) when Śrī Rāma of unfailing prowess has returned to his native land." (34) Having spoken thus and hissing, highly enraged, like a serpent, Bharata dropped (unconscious) to the ground like an elephant pricked with a javelin and a goad in a forest. (35) With deep red eyes, his garment loosened and all his jewels tossed about, the prince (Bharata), the tormentor of his foes, fell to the ground like a banner raised in honour of Indra and let down at the end of the festival. (36)

Thus ends Canto Seventy-four in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

पञ्चसप्ततितमः सर्गः

Canto LXXV

swearing that what had already come to pass in the shape of exile of Śrī Rāma, Sitā and Lakṣmaṇa and the resultant death of the King-Emperor was not to his liking, Bharata moves with Śatrughna to the apartments of his stepmother, Kausalyā, who speaks unkindly to him taunting him with the remark that his mother, Kaikeyī, had rendered good offices to him by securing for him the kingdom of Kosala sought after by him. Bharata, however, politely denies on a number of oaths all complicity in the machinations of his vile mother. Thereby coming to know his heart, the guileless Kausalyā places Bharata on her lap and weeps bitterly.

दीर्घकालात् समुत्थाय संज्ञां लब्ध्वा स वीर्यवान् । नेत्राभ्यामश्रुपूर्णाभ्यां दीनामुद्वीक्ष्य मातरम् ॥ १ ॥
सोऽमात्यमध्ये भरतो जननीमभ्यकुत्सयत् । राज्यं न कामये जातु मन्त्रये नापि मातरम् ॥ २ ॥

अभिषेकं न जानामि योऽभूद् राज्ञा समीक्षितः । विप्रकृष्टे ह्यहं देशे शत्रुघ्नसहितोऽभवम् ॥ ३ ॥
वनवासं न जानामि रामस्याहं महात्मनः । विवासनं च सौमित्रेः सीतायाश्च यथाभवत् ॥ ४ ॥
तथैव क्रोशतस्तस्य भरतस्य महात्मनः । कौसल्या शब्दमाज्ञाय सुमित्रा मिदमब्रवीत् ॥ ५ ॥

Regaining his consciousness after a long time the said Bharata, who was full of valour, got up and, casting a glance at his mother, who looked miserable (at the unexpected turn of events) with her eyes full of tears, reproached her right and left in the midst of the ministers (who had evidently collected there on coming to know of Bharata's arrival) and said, "I never coveted the throne nor did I (ever) hold (any) consultation with my mother. (1-2) Nor did I know (anything) about the installation (of Śrī Rāma as Prince Regent) which was contemplated by the king; for I happened to be (at that time) in a distant land with Śatrughna (my brother). (3) Nor (again) was I aware of the residence in the forest of the high-souled Śrī Rāma nor how the exile of Lakṣmaṇa (son of Sumitrā) and Sītā came about." (4) Recognizing the voice of the celebrated Bharata of noble mind, who was lamenting as aforesaid, Kausalyā spoke to Sumitrā as follows:— (5)

आगतः क्रूरकार्यायाः कैकेय्या भरतः सुतः । तमहं द्रष्टुमिच्छामि भरतं दीर्घदर्शिनम् ॥ ६ ॥
एवमुक्त्वा सुमित्रां तां विवर्णवदना कृशा । प्रतस्थे भरतो यत्र वेपमाना विचेतना ॥ ७ ॥
स तु राजात्मजश्चापि शत्रुघ्नसहितस्तदा । प्रतस्थे भरतो येन कौसल्याया निवेशनम् ॥ ८ ॥
ततः शत्रुघ्नभरतौ कौसल्यां प्रेक्ष्य दुःखितौ । पर्यष्वजेतां दुःखार्तां पतितां नष्टचेतनाम् ॥ ९ ॥
रुदन्तौ रुदती दुःखात् समेत्यार्या मनस्विनी । भरतं प्रत्युवाचेदं कौसल्या भृशदुःखिता ॥ १० ॥

"(I think) Bharata, the son of Kaikeyī of cruel deeds, has returned (from his maternal grandfather's). I long to see the aforesaid Bharata, who takes a long-range view of things." (6) Speaking as aforesaid to the said Sumitrā, the pale-faced and emaciated lady, who looked absent-minded, advanced trembling to the place where Bharata was. (7) Nay, accompanied by Śatrughna, the said prince (Bharata) too, on the other side, proceeded that (very) moment along the route by which Kausalyā's apartments could be reached. (8) Perceiving Kausalyā, who was stricken with sorrow, and had fallen unconscious (on the way), the two afflicted brothers, Śatrughna and Bharata, hugged her. (9) Embracing (in return) the two brothers, who were weeping through agony, the noble and high-minded Kausalyā, who was sore distressed, addressed Bharata as follows:—(10)

इदं ते राज्यकामस्य राज्यं प्राप्तमकण्टकम् । सम्प्राप्तं बत कैकेय्या शीघ्रं क्रूरेण कर्मणा ॥ ११ ॥
प्रस्थाप्य चीरवसनं पुत्रं मे वनवासिनम् । कैकेयी कं गुणं तत्र पश्यति क्रूरदर्शिनी ॥ १२ ॥
क्षिप्रं मामपि कैकेयी प्रस्थापयितुमर्हति । हिरण्यनाभो यत्रास्ते सुतो मे सुमहायशाः ॥ १३ ॥
अथवा स्वयमेवाहं सुमित्रानुचरा सुखम् । अग्निहोत्रं पुरस्कृत्य प्रस्थास्ये यत्र राघवः ॥ १४ ॥
कामं वा स्वयमेवाद्य तत्र मां नेतुमर्हसि । यत्रासौ पुरुषव्याघ्रस्तप्यते मे सुतस्तपः ॥ १५ ॥
इदं हि तव विस्तीर्णं धनधान्यसमाचितम् । हस्त्यश्वरथसम्पूर्णं राज्यं निर्यातितं तया ॥ १६ ॥
इत्यादिबहुभिर्वाक्यैः क्रूरैः सम्भर्त्सितोऽनघः । विव्यथे भरतोऽतीव व्रणे तुद्येव सूचिना ॥ १७ ॥
पपात चरणौ तस्यास्तदा सम्भ्रान्तचेतनः । विलप्य बहुधासंज्ञो लब्धसंज्ञस्ततः स्थितः ॥ १८ ॥
एवं विलपमानां तां प्राञ्जलिर्भरतस्तदा । कौसल्यां प्रत्युवाचेदं शोकैर्बहुभिरावृताम् ॥ १९ ॥

Bharata's Meeting with Kausalyā

"Enjoy this kingdom, devoid of enemies, obtained by you, who coveted it. Alas, it has been promptly secured (for you) by Kaikeyī through a cruel deed (in the shape of banishing Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa). (11) What good did the cruel-eyed Kaikeyī expect by sending (into exile) as she did my son (Rāma) as an ascetic clad in the bark of trees ? (12) Kaikeyī ought to send away soon me as well to the place where my exceptionally illustrious son with a golden navel (a distinguishing mark of Lord Viṣṇu) is sojourning. (13) Or, placing the sacrificial fire* (carried by a Brahman) at my head and followed by Sumitrā, I shall myself depart happily along the route by which Rāma has proceeded (to the forest). (14) Or you ought personally to take me now freely to the place where my aforesaid son, a (veritable) tiger among men, is practising austerities. (15) This extensive kingdom overflowing with riches and food-grains and fully equipped with elephants, horses and chariots has actually been conferred on you by her (your mother)." (16) Bitterly reproached in many such cruel words, the sinless Bharata felt extremely pained as he would when pricked with a needle in his wound. (17) Having lost his consciousness, his mind being utterly confused (to hear the taunting words of Kausalyā), Bharata presently regained his senses and, wailing in many ways, then fell at her feet. (18) To Kausalyā, overwhelmed with griefs of many kinds and lamenting as aforesaid, Bharata then replied with joined palms as follows:—(19)

आर्ये कस्मादजानन्तं गर्हसे मामकल्मषम् । विपुलां च मम प्रीतिं स्थितां जानासि राघवे ॥ २० ॥
कृतशास्त्रानुगा बुद्धिर्मा भूत् तस्य कदाचन । सत्यसंधः सतां श्रेष्ठो यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ २१ ॥
प्रैष्यं पापीयसां यातु सूर्यं च प्रति मेहतु । हन्तु पादेन गाः सुप्ता यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ २२ ॥
कारयित्वा महत् कर्म भर्ता भृत्यमनर्थकम् । अधर्मो योऽस्य सोऽस्यास्तु यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ २३ ॥
परिपालयमानस्य राज्ञो भूतानि पुत्रवत् । ततस्तु द्रुह्यतां पापं यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ २४ ॥
बलिषड्भागमुद्धृत्य नृपस्यारक्षितुः प्रजाः । अधर्मो योऽस्य सोऽस्यास्तु यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ २५ ॥
संश्रुत्य च तपस्विभ्यः सत्रे वै यज्ञदक्षिणाम् । तां चापलपतां पापं यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ २६ ॥

"Wherefore do you reproach me, O noble lady, guileless as I am and did not know anything (about Śrī Rāma's exile before I returned to Ayodhya) ? Nay, you know my great love borne towards Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu). (20) Let his judgment never follow (the teachings of) the scriptures as taught by his preceptor, with whose concurrence my elder brother, who is true to his promise and is the foremost of the virtuous, has gone into exile. (21) Let him with whose concurrence my elder brother has gone into exile suffer the lot of a servant of men belonging to the lowest stratum of society, incur the sin of answering the calls of nature facing the sun and reap the consequences of kicking cows lying asleep. (22) Let him with whose concurrence my elder brother has gone into exile incur the sin that attaches to a master who robs his servant of his resources after getting him accomplish a great deed (for him). (23) Let the sin attaching to those bearing enmity to a king protecting his subjects as his (own) offspring, be incurred by him with whose concurrence my elder brother has gone into exile. (24) Let the sin that attaches to a king who fails to protect

* The king's seniormost wife alone is entitled to preserve and worship the sacred fire in the absence or on the death of her husband.

the people even after collecting the land revenue in the form of one-sixth of the produce be incurred by him with whose concurrence my elder brother has gone into exile. (25) Let the sin attaching to those withholding payment of the sacrificial fee (even) after promising it to the priests practising austerities and officiating at a sacrifice be incurred by him with whose concurrence my elder brother has gone into exile. (26)

हस्त्यश्वरथसम्बाधे युद्धे शस्त्रसमाकुले । मा स्म कार्षीत् सतां धर्मं यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ २७ ॥
उपदिष्टं सुसूक्ष्मार्थं शास्त्रं यत्नेन धीमता । स नाशयतु दुष्टात्मा यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ २८ ॥
मा च तं व्यूढबाह्वंसं चन्द्रभास्करतेजसम् । द्राक्षीद् राज्यस्थमासीनं यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ २९ ॥
पायसं कृसरं छागं वृथा सोऽश्नातु निर्घृणः । गुरूंश्चाप्यवजानातु यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ३० ॥
गवां स्पृशतु पादेन गुरून् परिवदेत च । मित्रे द्रुह्येत सोऽत्यर्थं यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ३१ ॥
विश्वासात् कथितं किंचित् परिवादं मिथः क्वचित् । विवृणोतु स दुष्टात्मा यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ३२ ॥

"Let the sin attaching to the man who fails to observe the code of warfare followed by the virtuous on a field of battle crowded with elephants, horses and chariots and thick with weapons (of all kinds) be incurred by him with whose concurrence my elder brother has gone into exile. (27) Let that wicked soul with whose concurrence my elder brother has gone into exile forget the sacred lore expounding the most esoteric truths, taught with (great) pains by an enlightened preceptor. (28) Let him with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the forest) not (live to) see Śrī Rāma of muscular arms and shoulders, and possessing the splendour of the moon and the sun, willing to accept the kingship and installed (on the throne). (29) Let that merciless fellow with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) incur the sin of partaking of milk boiled with rice and sugar, seasoned rice boiled with sesame seeds and Moong (a kind of kidney bean), and goat-milk in vain (without offering them in the first instance to the almighty Lord, gods and manes etc.) and of showing disrespect to his elders (by failing to rise on their arrival and greet them). (30) Let him with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the forest) incur the sin of touching the body of cows with his feet, reviling his elders and bearing deep-rooted malice to a friend. (31) Let that evil-minded fellow with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the forest) incur the sin of revealing to someone (else) a fault of another confessed in private out of reliance (that he will not divulge the secret before anyone). (32)

अकर्ता चाकृतज्ञश्च त्यक्तात्मा निरपत्रपः । लोके भवतु विद्विष्टो यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ३३ ॥
पुत्रैर्दासैश्च भृत्यैश्च स्वगृहे परिवारितः । स एको मृष्टमश्नातु यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ३४ ॥
अप्राप्य सदृशान् दारानानपत्यः प्रमीयताम् । अनवाप्य क्रियां धर्म्यां यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ३५ ॥
माऽऽत्मनः संततिं द्राक्षीत् स्वेषु दारेषु दुःखितः । आयुः समग्रमप्राप्य यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ३६ ॥
राजस्त्रीबालवृद्धानां वधे यत् पापमुच्यते । भृत्यत्यागे च यत् पापं तत् पापं प्रतिपद्यताम् ॥ ३७ ॥
लाक्षया मधुमांसेन लोहेन च विषेण च । सदैव बिभृयाद् भृत्यान् यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ३८ ॥
संग्रामे समुपोढे च शत्रुपक्षभयंकरे । पलायमानो वध्येत यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ३९ ॥

"Let the fellow with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) never (be in a position to) return a service;

(nay) let him prove ungrateful and shameless, let him be shunned (by good men) and hated by all. (33) Let the fellow with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) incur the sin of partaking of a savoury dish alone, at his own home, though surrounded by (a number of) sons, servants and dependants. (34) Let the fellow with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) die issueless failing to secure a wife becoming of him (in point of pedigree, disposition and so on) and (in this way) not enjoying the privilege of performing sacred duties (like Agnihotra etc., which can be performed only by a married couple). (35) Let the fellow with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) not behold (the face of) a (male) child through his (wedded) wife and die full of agony without attaining the full age (of a hundred years). (36) Let him incur the same sin which is declared as attaching to the act of killing a ruler, woman, infant or aged man and forsaking a dependant. (37) Let him with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) always support his dependants through sale of lacquer, honey and flesh, iron and poison (which is prohibited in the Śāstras)*. (38) Let him with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) be killed while fleeing at a time when a battle inspiring terror into the adversaries has commenced. (39)

कपालपाणिः पृथिवीमटतां चीरसंवृतः । भिक्षमाणो यथोन्मत्तो यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ४० ॥
मद्यप्रसक्तो भवतु स्त्रीष्वक्षेषु च नित्यशः । कामक्रोधाभिभूतश्च यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ४१ ॥
मास्य धर्मे मनो भूयादधर्मं स निषेवताम् । अपात्रवर्षी भवतु यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ४२ ॥
संचितान्यस्य वित्तानि विविधानि सहस्रशः । दस्युभिर्विप्रलुप्यन्तां यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ४३ ॥
उभे संध्ये शयानस्य यत् पापं परिकल्प्यते । तच्च पापं भवेत् तस्य यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ४४ ॥
यदग्निदायके पापं यत् पापं गुरुतल्पगे । मित्रद्रोहे च यत् पापं तत् पापं प्रतिपद्यताम् ॥ ४५ ॥
देवतानां पितॄणां च मातापित्रोस्तथैव च । मा स्म कार्षीत् स शुश्रूषां यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ४६ ॥

"Let him with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed for the woods roam about like a madman, clad in tatters and begging alms, bowl in hand. (40) Let him with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) be given over from day to day to wine as well as to women and dice and overpowered by lust and anger. (41) Let the man with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) indulge in unrighteousness and shower his wealth on the undeserving and let his mind never take delight in piety. (42) Let the possessions of every description, accumulated in thousands, of the fellow with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) be looted by robbers. (43) Let that (very) sin which is concluded as attaching to a man who sleeps during both the twilights be incurred by him with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods). (44) Let him incur that (very) sin which attaches to the man who practises arson, to him who violates the bed of his teacher and to the fellow who plays a friend

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* A Smṛti text says:—

लाक्षालवणमांसानि वर्जनीयानि विक्रये ।

"Lacquer, salt and flesh should be eschewed in sale."

foul. (45) Let the fellow with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) not (have an opportunity to) do service to gods (in the form of Agnihotra etc.) and to the manes (in the form of periodical Śrāddha) and likewise to his (living) parents. (46)

सतां लोकात् सतां कीर्त्याः सज्जुष्टात् कर्मणस्तथा । भ्रश्यतु क्षिप्रमद्यैव यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ४७ ॥
अपास्य मातृशुश्रूषामनर्थे सोऽवतिष्ठताम् । दीर्घबाहुर्महावक्षा यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ४८ ॥
बहुभृत्यो दरिद्रश्च ज्वररोगसमन्वितः । समायात् सततं क्लेशं यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ४९ ॥
आशामाशंसमानानां दीनानामूर्ध्वचक्षुषाम् । अर्थिनां वितथां कुर्याद् यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ५० ॥
मायया रमतां नित्यं पुरुषः पिशुनोऽशुचिः । राज्ञो भीतस्त्वधर्मात्मा यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ५१ ॥
ऋतुस्नातां सतीं भार्यामृतुकालानुरोधिनीम् । अतिवर्तेत दुष्टात्मा यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ५२ ॥

"Let the man with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) forfeit this very day, nay, at once (his claim to) the region inhabited by the virtuous (after their death), forfeit (his claim to) the reputation enjoyed by good men and fall from the course of conduct followed by the righteous. (47) Let the fellow with whose concurrence my elder brother, distinguished by long arms and a broad chest, has departed (for the woods) be devoted to the evil path, giving up service to his mother. (48) Let him with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) be a pauper though having many dependants (to support); let him be seized with ailment in the form of fever and suffer hardship continually. (49) Let the man with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) falsify the hopes of destitute suppliants uttering his praises and looking upwards (in his face in expectancy). (50) Let him with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) ever delight in deception, remaining a backbiter and impure and afraid of the king (all his life), his mind being given to unrighteousness. (51) Let the evil-minded fellow with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) ignore his chaste wife who has attained purity after menstruation (and is thus fit to conceive) and approaches him (for union), the period being favourable for procreation. (52)

विप्रलुप्तप्रजातस्य दुष्कृतं ब्राह्मणस्य यत् । तदेतत् प्रतिपद्येत यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ५३ ॥
ब्राह्मणायोद्यतां पूजां विहन्तु कलुषेन्द्रियः । बालवत्सां च गां दोग्धु यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ५४ ॥
धर्मदारान् परित्यज्य परदारान् निषेवताम् । त्यक्तधर्मरतिर्मूढो यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ५५ ॥
पानीयदूषके पापं तथैव विषदायके । यत्तदेकः स लभतां यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ५६ ॥
तृषार्ते सति पानीये विप्रलम्भेन योजयन् । यत् पापं लभते तत् स्याद् यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ५७ ॥
भक्त्या विवदमानेषु मार्गमाश्रित्य पश्यतः । तेन पापेन युज्येत यस्यार्योऽनुमते गतः ॥ ५८ ॥

"Let him with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) incur that very sin which attaches to a Brahman whose offsprings have perished (for lack of nourishment). (53) Let that man of sinful mind with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) interrupt the worship going to be offered to a Brahman (by another) and milk a cow which calved less than ten days ago. (54) Let the fool with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) enjoy another's wife, forsaking his

lawful wife and having given up his love for piety. (55) Let the fellow with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) incur all at once the sin that attaches to him who defiles the water (of a well or tank) as well as that which attaches to one who administers poison. (56) Let the sin which a man disappointing a person oppressed with thirst by recourse to deception (in the form of giving a false report denying the presence of water), even though there is water (with him), attach to him with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods). (57) Let him with whose concurrence my elder brother has departed (for the woods) be held guilty of the same sin which attaches to a man standing on the road and witnessing a dispute with partiality for one of the disputing parties." (58)

एवमाश्वासयन्नेव दुःखार्तोऽनुपपात ह । विहीनां पतिपुत्राभ्यां कौसल्यां पार्थिवात्मजः ॥ ५९ ॥
तदा तं शपथैः कष्टैः शपमानमचेतनम् । भरतं शोकसंतप्तं कौसल्या वाक्यमब्रवीत् ॥ ६० ॥
मम दुःखमिदं पुत्र भूयः समुपजायते । शपथैः शपमानो हि प्राणानुपरुणत्सि मे ॥ ६१ ॥
दिष्ट्या न चलितो धर्मादात्मा ते सहलक्ष्मणः । वत्स सत्यप्रतिज्ञो हि सतां लोकानवाप्स्यसि ॥ ६२ ॥
इत्युक्त्वा चाङ्कमानीय भरतं भ्रातृवत्सलम् । परिष्वज्य महाबाहुं रुरोद भृशदुःखिता ॥ ६३ ॥
एवं विलपमानस्य दुःखार्तस्य महात्मनः । मोहाच्च शोकसंरम्भाद् बभूव लुलितं मनः ॥ ६४ ॥
लालप्यमानस्य विचेतनस्य प्रनष्टबुद्धेः पतितस्य भूमौ ।
मुहुर्मुहुर्निःश्वसतश्च दीर्घं सा तस्य शोकेन जगाम रात्रिः ॥ ६५ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे पञ्चसप्ततितमः सर्गः ॥ ७५ ॥

Even while reassuring as aforesaid Kausalyā, who was bereft (both) of her husband and son, the prince (Bharata), they say, fell to the ground, stricken as he was with agony. (59) Thereupon Kausalyā spoke as follows to Bharata, who was solemnly pleading his innocence by means of oaths that were hard to take and had become unconscious, sore stricken as he was with grief:—(60) "The present agony of mine, my son, is aggravated all the more inasmuch as you are choking my breath while solemnly pleading your innocence by means of oaths. (61) Luckily enough your mind, endowed as it is with excellences, has not deviated from righteousness. Since you are true to your promise you will attain to the realms of the virtuous, my child !" (62) Saying so and placing the mighty-armed Bharata, who was (so) fond of his brother, on her lap, and embracing him, Kausalyā (who felt sore distressed) wept (aloud). (63) The mind of the high-souled Bharata, who was wailing as aforesaid, stricken as he was with sorrow, got agitated through infatuation and excess of grief. (64) While Bharata was lamenting thus and lay fallen unconscious on the ground, sighing again and again through grief, his power of judgment having been lost, the aforesaid night passed. (65)

Thus ends Canto Seventy-five in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

षट्सप्ततितमः सर्गः

Canto LXXVI

Removing his father's dead body from the vessel full of oil and cremating it with the help of articles befitting an emperor, and offering libations of water to the spirit of the deceased on the bank of the Sarayu as enjoined by Vasiṣṭha, Bharata returns to Ayodhya.

तमेवं शोकसंतप्तं भरतं कैकयीसुतम् । उवाच वदतां श्रेष्ठो वसिष्ठः श्रेष्ठवाग्‌ऋषिः ॥ १ ॥
अलं शोकेन भद्रं ते राजपुत्र महायशः । प्राप्तकालं नरपतेः कुरु संयानमुत्तमम् ॥ २ ॥
वसिष्ठस्य वचः श्रुत्वा भरतो धरणीं गतः । प्रेतकृत्यानि सर्वाणि कारयामास धर्मवित् ॥ ३ ॥
उद्धृत्य तैलसंसेकात् स तु भूमौ निवेशितम् । आपीतवर्णवदनं प्रसुप्तमिव भूमिपम् ॥ ४ ॥
संवेश्य शयने चाग्र्ये नानारत्नपरिष्कृते । ततो दशरथं पुत्रो विललाप सुदुःखितः ॥ ५ ॥
किं ते व्यवसितं राजन् प्रोषिते मय्यनागते । विवास्य रामं धर्मज्ञं लक्ष्मणं च महाबलम् ॥ ६ ॥
क्व यास्यसि महाराज हित्वेमं दुःखितं जनम् । हीनं पुरुषसिंहेन रामेणाक्लिष्टकर्मणा ॥ ७ ॥
योगक्षेमं तु तेऽव्यग्रं कोऽस्मिन् कल्पयिता पुरे । त्वयि प्रयाते स्वस्तात रामे च वनमाश्रिते ॥ ८ ॥
विधवा पृथिवी राजंस्त्वया हीना न राजते । हीनचन्द्रेव रजनी नगरी प्रतिभाति माम् ॥ ९ ॥

To Bharata, the son of Kaikeyī, who was sore stricken with grief as aforesaid, Sage Vasiṣṭha, the foremost of speakers, spoke (as follows) in a most polite language.—(1) "Have done with grief, O highly illustrious prince ! May good betide you ! Perform (now) in an excellent way the funeral of the (deceased) king, which is (now) overdue." (2) Hearing the admonition of Vasiṣṭha, Bharata, who knew what is right, fell prostrate and ordered all obsequies (concerning his father) to be taken in hand. (3) Taking (the dead body of) the king out of the vessel in which he lay immersed in oil, and placing Daśaratha,—who was (first) laid on the ground and, though pale-faced, looked as though he were fast asleep,—on an exquisite bier decked with various jewels, his son (Bharata) lamented (as follows), sore distressed as he was:—(4-5) "Having sent into exile Śrī Rāma as well as Lakṣmaṇa, who is possessed of great strength, at a time when I was away from home and had not yet returned, what did you intend to do, O king, knowing as you did what is right ? (6) Where will you go abandoning this distressed servant (of yours), (already) bereft of Śrī Rāma, a (veritable) lion among men, who does great deeds without (the least) exertion, O great king ? (7) Now that you have departed for heaven, O dear father, and Śrī Rāma has retired to the woods, (I wonder) who will quietly meet the needs of the people and ensure the safety of their person and property in this capital (of yours) ? (8) Bereft of you and (thus) deprived of its lord, the earth does not look charming (any more); (nay), the city (too) appears to me (cheerless) as a night bereft of the moon." (9)

एवं विलपमानं तं भरतं दीनमानसम् । अब्रवीद् वचनं भूयो वसिष्ठस्तु महामुनिः ॥ १० ॥
प्रेतकार्याणि यान्यस्य कर्तव्यानि विशाम्पतेः । तान्यव्यग्रं महाबाहो क्रियन्तामविचारितम् ॥ ११ ॥
तथेति भरतो वाक्यं वसिष्ठस्याभिपूज्य तत् । ऋत्विक्पुरोहिताचार्यांस्त्वरयामास सर्वशः ॥ १२ ॥

ये त्वग्नयो नरेन्द्रस्य अग्न्यगाराद् बहिष्कृताः । ऋत्विग्भिर्याजकैश्चैव ते हूयन्ते यथाविधि ॥ १३ ॥
शिबिकायामथारोप्य राजानं गतचेतनम् । बाष्पकण्ठा विमनसस्तमूहुः परिचारकाः ॥ १४ ॥
हिरण्यं च सुवर्णं च वासांसि विविधानि च । प्रकिरन्तो जना मार्गे नृपतेरग्रतो ययुः ॥ १५ ॥
चन्दनागुरुनिर्यासान् सरलं पद्मकं तथा । देवदारूणि चाहृत्य चितां चक्रुस्तथापरे ॥ १६ ॥
गन्धानुच्चावचांश्चान्यांस्तत्र गत्वाथ भूमिपम् । तत्र संवेशयामासुश्चितामध्ये तमृत्विजः ॥ १७ ॥

To Bharata, who was lamenting as aforesaid, afflicted in mind as he was, the eminent sage Vasiṣṭha for his part spoke again in the following words:— (10) "Whatever funeral rites in relation to this monarch ought to be done should be coolly and unhesitatingly gone through, O mighty-armed prince !" (11) Bowing to the aforesaid command of Vasiṣṭha in the words "Let it be so !" Bharata urged everyone, *viz*, the priests engaged for sacrificial purposes, family priests and the Ācāryas to make haste. (12) The sacred fires maintained by the king, that had been taken out of the fire-sanctuary (on the latter's death) were being worshipped by the priests engaged for sacrificial purposes and superintending priests according to the scriptural ordinance. (13) Having placed the king, whose consciousness had departed (days ago), on a bier, the servants, who were feeling disconsolate, now bore him (on their shoulders to the cremation ground), their throats choked with tears. (14) Scattering flowers of silver and gold and pieces of cloth of every description on the road, people walked ahead of the king. (15) Fetching sandalwood, aloe, bdellium, the wood of Sarala (a species of pine) and Cerasus puddum and logs of deodar (the Himalayan cedar). others raised a funeral pile. (16) Nay, throwing other fragrant substances of various kinds into the funeral pile, the priests officiating at the obsequies laid the (deceased) emperor in the middle of the pyre at the cremation ground. (17)

तदा हुताशनं दत्त्वा जेपुस्तस्य तदृत्विजः । जगुश्च ते यथाशास्त्रं तत्र सामानि सामगाः ॥ १८ ॥
शिबिकाभिश्च यानैश्च यथार्हं तस्य योषितः । नगरान्निर्ययुस्तत्र वृद्धैः परिवृतास्तथा ॥ १९ ॥
प्रसव्यं चापि तं चक्रुर्ऋत्विजोऽग्निचितं नृपम् । स्त्रियश्च शोकसंतप्ताः कौसल्याप्रमुखास्तदा ॥ २० ॥
क्रौञ्चीनामिव नारीणां निनादस्तत्र शुश्रुवे । आर्तानां करुणं काले क्रोशन्तीनां सहस्रशः ॥ २१ ॥
ततो रुदन्त्यो विवशा विलप्य च पुनः पुनः । यानेभ्यः सरयूतीरमवतेरुर्नृपाङ्गनाः ॥ २२ ॥
कृत्वोदकं ते भरतेन सार्धं नृपाङ्गना मन्त्रिपुरोहिताश्च ।
पुरं प्रविश्याश्रुपरीतनेत्रा भूमौ दशाहं व्यनयन्त दुःखम् ॥ २३ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे षट्सप्ततितमः सर्गः ॥ ७६ ॥

Setting fire to the pyre (through the instrumentality of Bharata) the aforesaid priests engaged for the benefit of the emperor then recited sacred texts (relevant to the funeral rites); while those among the officiating priests who could recite the hymns of Sāmaveda chanted them according to the rules. (18) Attended by elderly guards the king's consorts likewise went out of the city (to the cremation ground) in palanquins and chariots according to their rank. (19) Then the priests officiating at the obsequies too as well as the ladies led by Kausalyā, who were sore stricken with grief, went clockwise round the said monarch, who had performed sacrifices (culminating in Aśwamedha). (20) There was heard on that occasion

the noise of afflicted women wailing piteously in thousands like so many female cranes. (21) Having lamented again and again and crying helplessly, the king's consorts got down from their chariots at the bank of the Sarayu. (22) Having offered water (to the spirit of the deceased) along with Bharata and entering the city (once more) the king's consorts as well as the counsellors and family priests spent the following ten days (of their impurity caused by the emperor's death) in agony, reposing on the ground, their eyes filled with tears. (23)

Thus ends Canto Seventy-six in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

सप्तसप्ततितमः सर्गः

Canto LXXVII

Having performed with the help of Śatrughna all the obsequial rites relating to his deceased father on the twelfth day after his death, Bharata gifts to the Brahmans abundant gold and jewels as a part of the obsequies. Overwhelmed with grief on reaching the funeral pile in order to pick up the principal bones of the deceased on the thirteenth day, the prince drops to the ground. Rolling on the ground, Śatrughna for his part wails in profusion. Comforted by Vasiṣṭha and Sumantra, the two brothers urge the ministers to expedite the work of picking up the bones.

ततो दशाहेऽतिगते कृतशौचो नृपात्मजः । द्वादशेऽहनि सम्प्राप्ते श्राद्धकर्माण्यकारयत् ॥ १ ॥
ब्राह्मणेभ्यो धनं रत्नं ददावन्नं च पुष्कलम् । बास्तिकं बहु शुक्लं च गाश्चापि बहुशस्तदा ॥ २ ॥
दासीर्दासांश्च यानानि वेश्मानि सुमहान्ति च । ब्राह्मणेभ्यो ददौ पुत्रो राज्ञस्तस्यौर्ध्वदेहिकम् ॥ ३ ॥
ततः प्रभातसमये दिवसे च त्रयोदशे । विललाप महाबाहुर्भरतः शोकमूर्च्छितः ॥ ४ ॥
शब्दापिहितकण्ठश्च शोधनार्थमुपागतः । चितामूले पितुर्वाक्यमिदमाह सुदुःखितः ॥ ५ ॥
तात यस्मिन् निसृष्टोऽहं त्वया भ्रातरि राघवे । तस्मिन् वनं प्रव्रजिते शून्ये त्यक्तोऽस्म्यहं त्वया ॥ ६ ॥
यस्या गतिरनाथायाः पुत्रः प्रव्राजितो वनम् । तामम्बां तात कौसल्यां त्यक्त्वा त्वं क्व गतो नृप ॥ ७ ॥

Having attained purity (by performing the obsequial rites pertaining to the eleventh day of his father's death) when ten days had elapsed the prince (Bharata) next performed the obsequial rites pertaining to the twelfth day when that day duly arrived. (1) On that occasion he gifted to the Brahmans abundant gold, jewellery and foodgrains, a large herd of white goats and good many cows too. (2) The prince further gave away to the Brahmans, for the good of the king in the life beyond, female as well as male servants, chariots and very big houses. (3) Then on the thirteenth day at the time of daybreak the mighty-armed Bharata, overwhelmed as he was with grief, broke into a lament. (4)

Nay, having reached the foot of his father's funeral pile in order to collect the bones (for their immersion in the holy Sarayu river), the prince (who was sore distressed) addressed the following words (to his deceased father), his throat being choked through crying:— (5) "My celebrated (elder) brother, Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu), to whose care I was committed by you, having retired to the forest, O dear father, I have been (virtually) abandoned by you in a desolate place. (6) O dear father, O protector of men, where have you gone leaving Kausalyā, that mother of mine, whose son, the support of that forlorn lady, has been exiled to the forest ?" (7)

दृष्ट्वा भस्मारुणं तच्च दग्धास्थि स्थानमण्डलम् । पितुः शरीरनिर्वाणं निष्टनन् विषसाद ह ॥ ८ ॥
स तु दृष्ट्वा रुदन् दीनः पपात धरणीतले । उत्थाप्यमानः शक्रस्य यन्त्रध्वज इवोच्छ्रितः ॥ ९ ॥
अभिपेतुस्ततः सर्वे तस्यामात्याः शुचिव्रतम् । अन्तकाले निपतितं ययातिमृषयो यथा ॥ १० ॥
शत्रुघ्नश्चापि भरतं दृष्ट्वा शोकपरिप्लुतम् । विसंज्ञो न्यपतद् भूमौ भूमिपालमनुस्मरन् ॥ ११ ॥
उन्मत्त इव निश्चित्तो विललाप सुदुःखितः । स्मृत्वा पितुर्गुणाङ्गानि तानि तानि तदा तदा ॥ १२ ॥

Seeing that circular spot, the place where his father's remains had been burnt, (nay) which was (now) covered with ashes and red (because of its having been burnt with a blazing fire) and was (further) strewn with burnt bones, Bharata, they say, grew melancholy and began to cry. (8) Nay, afflicted to behold the spot, Bharata fell weeping on the ground as a tall banner would while being raised in honour of Indra with the help of a mechanical device. (9) Thereupon all his ministers rushed to Bharata (of holy resolve) as (royal) sages (Aṣṭaka and others) hastily approached King Yayāti fallen down (from heaven) when the stock of his merits (that sustained him in heaven) had been exhausted. (10) Nay, perceiving Bharata overwhelmed with grief, Śatrughna too, who had all along been thinking of the emperor (his father), dropped senseless on the ground. (11) Sore distressed to remember the various gestures of his father born of his loving qualities and made by him from time to time, Śatrughna lamented (as follows) like a madman, bewildered as he was:—(12)

मन्थराप्रभवस्तीव्रः कैकेयीग्राहसंकुलः । वरदानमयोऽक्षोभ्योऽमज्जयच्छोकसागरः ॥ १३ ॥
सुकुमारं च बालं च सततं लालितं त्वया । क्व तात भरतं हित्वा विलपन्तं गतो भवान् ॥ १४ ॥
ननु भोज्येषु पानेषु वस्त्रेष्वाभरणेषु च । प्रवारयति सर्वान् नस्तन्नः कोऽद्य करिष्यति ॥ १५ ॥
अवदारणकाले तु पृथिवी नावदीर्यते । विहीना या त्वया राज्ञा धर्मज्ञेन महात्मना ॥ १६ ॥
पितरि स्वर्गमापन्ने रामे चारण्यमाश्रिते । किं मे जीवितसामर्थ्यं प्रवेक्ष्यामि हुताशनम् ॥ १७ ॥
हीनो भ्रात्रा च पित्रा च शून्यामिक्ष्वाकुपालिताम् । अयोध्यां न प्रवेक्ष्यामि प्रवेक्ष्यामि तपोवनम् ॥ १८ ॥

"The violent and formidable sea of grief, released by Mantharā, which has appeared in the form of the boons (granted by my father in favour of Kaikeyī) and has been rendered fearful by alligators in the form of Kaikeyī's words, has overwhelmed us all. (13) Where have you gone, dear father, leaving Bharata,—who is (yet) a (mere) stripling, tender of body, and was constantly fondled by you,—weeping ? (14) Indeed you made us all (the four brothers) have our best choice out of (a large variety of) eatables, drinks, articles of wearing apparel and ornaments (placed before us). (Since you have disappeared from our midst) who will discharge this function now ? (15)

(How strange that) this earth, even though it has been deprived of you, its high-souled ruler, who knew what is right, is not riven even at a time when it should have been riven ! (16) My father having reached heaven and Śrī Rāma having retired to the forest, what energy has been left in me to survive ? I shall (accordingly) enter the fire. (17) Bereft of my brother and father too I would not return to Ayodhya,—which, though ruled (so long) by scions of Ikṣwāku, has (now) become desolate,—but shall withdraw to a forest suitable for austerities." (18)

तयोर्विलपितं श्रुत्वा व्यसनं चाप्यवेक्ष्य तत् । भृशमार्ततरा भूयः सर्व एवानुगामिनः ॥ १९ ॥
ततो विषण्णौ श्रान्तौ च शत्रुघ्नभरतावुभौ । धरायां स्म व्यचेष्टेतां भग्नशृङ्गाविवर्षभौ ॥ २० ॥
ततः प्रकृतिमान् वैद्यः पितुरेषां पुरोहितः । वसिष्ठो भरतं वाक्यमुत्थाप्य तमुवाच ह ॥ २१ ॥
त्रयोदशोऽयं दिवसः पितुर्वृत्तस्य ते विभो । सावशेषास्थिनिचये किमिह त्वं विलम्बसे ॥ २२ ॥
त्रीणि द्वन्द्वानि भूतेषु प्रवृत्तान्यविशेषतः । तेषु चापरिहार्येषु नैवं भवितुमर्हसि ॥ २३ ॥
सुमन्त्रश्चापि शत्रुघ्नमुत्थाप्याभिप्रसाद्य च । श्रावयामास तत्त्वज्ञः सर्वभूतभवाभवौ ॥ २४ ॥
उत्थितौ तौ नरव्याघ्रौ प्रकाशेते यशस्विनौ । वर्षातपपरिग्लानौ पृथगिन्द्रध्वजाविव ॥ २५ ॥
अश्रूणि परिमृद्नन्तौ रक्ताक्षौ दीनभाषिणौ । अमात्यास्त्वरयन्ति स्म तनयौ चापराः क्रियाः ॥ २६ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे सप्तसप्ततितमः सर्गः ॥ ७७ ॥

Hearing the lament of the two brothers and perceiving their extreme agony as aforesaid, all their attendants felt sore distressed even more. (19) Dejected and distressed, Śatrughna and Bharata both now began to roll on the ground like a pair of bulls whose horns have been broken. (20) Raising Bharata up, the omniscient Vasiṣṭha, the family priest of their father as well as of them all, endowed as he was with an amiable disposition, spoke to him as follows, so the tradition goes:—(21) "Today is the thirteenth day since your father was cremated, my lord ! Why (then) do you lag behind now in winding up the remaining part of the ceremony of collecting the bones (*viz,* cleaning and washing the ground on which the king's body had been cremated and consigning the ashes to the river) ? (22) Three pairs of opposites (life and death, joy and sorrow, gain and loss) prevail alike in (all) living beings. And they being unavoidable, you ought not to behave like this." (23) Raising up and pacifying Śatrughna, Sumantra too, a knower of the Truth, told him how birth and death were inevitable for all created beings. (24) The two illustrious princes, who were (veritable) tigers among men and had (now) got up, shone like two banners severally raised in honour of Indra (the god of rain) and soiled through rain and the sun. (25) The ministers (now) urged the two princes,—who were wiping their tears and speaking in a piteous tone, their eyes reddened (through excessive grief),—to expedite the other rites (pertaining to the thirteenth day, *viz,* removing the ashes and throwing them into the river and so on). (26)

Thus ends Canto Seventy-seven in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

अष्टसप्ततितमः सर्गः

Canto LXXVIII

While Bharata is contemplating to undertake a journey to meet Śrī Rāma, Śatrughna blames Lakṣmaṇa for failing to restrain his father and forcibly prevent Śrī Rāma's exile. In the meantime Bharata catches sight of Mantharā standing at the door decked with ornaments and points to her as the root of all mischief. Śatrughna thereupon pounces upon the maidservant standing in the midst of her companions and, seizing her by her locks, drags her on the floor and reproaches Kaikeyī too. On the latter pleading for mercy on Mantharā's behalf, Bharata intervenes and Śatrughna lets her go.

अथ यात्रां समीहन्तं शत्रुघ्नो लक्ष्मणानुजः । भरतं शोकसंतप्तमिदं वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ १ ॥
गतिर्यः सर्वभूतानां दुःखे किं पुनरात्मनः । स रामः सत्त्वसम्पन्नः स्त्रिया प्रव्राजितो वनम् ॥ २ ॥
बलवान् वीर्यसम्पन्नो लक्ष्मणो नाम योऽप्यसौ । किं न मोचयते रामं कृत्वापि पितृनिग्रहम् ॥ ३ ॥
पूर्वमेव तु विग्राह्यः समवेक्ष्य नयानयौ । उत्पथं यः समारूढो नार्या राजा वशं गतः ॥ ४ ॥
इति सम्भाषमाणे तु शत्रुघ्ने लक्ष्मणानुजे । प्राग्द्वारेऽभूत् तदा कुब्जा सर्वाभरणभूषिता ॥ ५ ॥
लिप्ता चन्दनसारेण राजवस्त्राणि बिभ्रती । विविधं विविधैस्तैस्तैर्भूषणैश्च विभूषिता ॥ ६ ॥
मेखलादामभिश्चित्रैरन्यैश्च वरभूषणैः । बभासे बहुभिर्बद्धा रज्जुभिरिव वानरी ॥ ७ ॥

To Bharata, who was sore stricken with grief and was contemplating to undertake a journey (to meet Śrī Rāma), Śatrughna, the younger brother of Lakṣmaṇa, spoke as follows:—(1) "(How strange that) the same Śrī Rāma who is possessed of (extraordinary) might and is the support of all created beings in distress, much more of himself and his own, was exiled into the forest by a woman ! (2) What a pity that even Lakṣmaṇa, who is full of might and rich in prowess, did not deliver Śrī Rāma (from distress), going the length even (if necessary) of restraining his father ! (3) In fact, fully considering what is just and what is unjust, the king, who had adopted a wrong course, having fallen into the clutches of a woman, ought to have been restrained even before (matters came to a head)." (4) Even while Śatrughna, the younger brother of Lakṣmaṇa, was speaking as aforesaid, Mantharā (the hunch-backed maidservant of Kaikeyī) appeared at that (very) moment decked with all (sorts of) ornaments at the eastern door. (5) Smeared (all over) with excellent sandal-paste and wearing royal constumes she was adorned in various ways with ornaments of every description pertaining to all limbs. (6) Adorned with lovely girdles and other excellent ornaments (worn round the waist), she looked like a female monkey bound with a number of strings. (7)

तां समीक्ष्य तदा द्वाःस्थो भृशं पापस्य कारिणीम् । गृहीत्वाकरुणं कुब्जां शत्रुघ्नाय न्यवेदयत् ॥ ८ ॥
यस्याः कृते वने रामो न्यस्तदेहश्च वः पिता । सेयं पापा नृशंसा च तस्याः कुरु यथामति ॥ ९ ॥
शत्रुघ्नश्च तदाज्ञाय वचनं भृशदुःखितः । अन्तःपुरचरान् सर्वानित्युवाच धृतव्रतः ॥ १० ॥

तीव्रमुत्पादितं दुःखं भ्रातॄणां मे तथा पितुः । यथा सेयं नृशंसस्य कर्मणः फलमश्नुताम् ॥ ११ ॥
एवमुक्त्वा च तेनाशु सखीजनसमावृता । गृहीता बलवत् कुब्जा सा तद् गृहमनादयत् ॥ १२ ॥
ततः सुभृशसंतप्तस्तस्याः सर्वः सखीजनः । क्रुद्धमाज्ञाय शत्रुघ्नं व्यपलायत सर्वशः ॥ १३ ॥
अमन्त्रयत कृत्स्नश्च तस्याः सर्वः सखीजनः । यथायं समुपक्रान्तो निःशेषं नः करिष्यति ॥ १४ ॥
सानुक्रोशां वदान्यां च धर्मज्ञां च यशस्विनीम् । कौसल्यां शरणं यामः सा हि नोऽस्ति ध्रुवा गतिः ॥ १५ ॥

Gazing on that humpback, who was responsible for the sinful deed (in the form of banishment of Śrī Rāma and others, which had proved a terrible curse for the entire population of Ayodhya) and seizing her most heartlessly, the porter (on duty) delivered her to Śatrughna (with the following words):—(8) "Here is that cruel wretch because of whom Śrī Rāma is living in the forest and your father has cast off his body ! Deal with her as you please." (9) Pondering the aforesaid submission (of the porter) and having determined his course of action, Śatrughna, who was feeling sore distressed, spoke to all the inmates of the gynaeceum as follows:—(10) "Let this wench reap the fruit of her cruel deed as acute agony has been caused by her to my brothers as well as to my father." (11) With these words the humpback, who was surrounded by her female companions, was violently seized by him at once; (and) she (in her turn) made that chamber (where he stood) resound (with her shrieks). (12) Extremely agonized to perceive Śatrughna enraged, all her female companions forthwith ran away helter-skelter in all directions. (13) All her female companions as well as the entire menial staff said to one another, "From the way in which he has started dealing with us it can easily be concluded that he will put an end to us (all). (14) We shall fly for protection to Kausalyā, who is merciful, polite of speech and glorious and knows what is right; for she is our unfailing asylum." (15)

स च रोषेण संवीतः शत्रुघ्नः शत्रुशासनः । विचकर्ष तदा कुब्जां क्रोशन्तीं पृथिवीतले ॥ १६ ॥
तस्यां ह्याकृष्यमाणायां मन्थरायां ततस्ततः । चित्रं बहुविधं भाण्डं पृथिव्यां तद् व्यशीर्यत ॥ १७ ॥
तेन भाण्डेन विस्तीर्णं श्रीमद् राजनिवेशनम् । अशोभत तदा भूयः शारदं गगनं यथा ॥ १८ ॥
स बली बलवत्क्रोधाद् गृहीत्वा पुरुषर्षभः । कैकेयीमभिनिर्भर्त्स्य बभाषे परुषं वचः ॥ १९ ॥
तैर्वाक्यैः परुषैर्दुःखैः कैकेयी भृशदुःखिता । शत्रुघ्नभयसंत्रस्ता पुत्रं शरणमागता ॥ २० ॥

Nay, overwhelmed with anger, the said Śatrughna, the chastiser of his enemies, then violently dragged the crying humpback along the floor. (16) While the notorious Mantharā was being dragged to and fro on the ground, her excellent ornaments of various kinds, mentioned above, were actually dashed to pieces. (17) Strewn with those (broken) ornaments, the splendid royal palace shone all the more at that moment like the (clear) autumnal sky (spangled with stars). (18) Continuing to hold Mantharā in violent rage and sharply rebuking Kaikeyī (who had come to protect her maidservant), that mighty prince, a (veritable) jewel among men, spoke harsh words (to her). (19) Greatly pained by those harsh and unpleasant words and overwhelmed with fear of Śatrughna, Kaikeyī fled for protection to her (own) son. (20)

तं प्रेक्ष्य भरतः क्रुद्धं शत्रुघ्नमिदमब्रवीत् । अवध्याः सर्वभूतानां प्रमदाः क्षम्यतामिति ॥ २१ ॥
हन्यामहमिमां पापां कैकेयीं दुष्टचारिणीम् । यदि मां धार्मिको रामो नासूयेन्मातृघातकम् ॥ २२ ॥

इमामपि हतां कुब्जां यदि जानाति राघवः । त्वां च मां चैव धर्मात्मा नाभिभाषिष्यते ध्रुवम् ॥ २३ ॥
भरतस्य वचः श्रुत्वा शत्रुघ्नो लक्ष्मणानुजः । न्यवर्तत ततो दोषात् तां मुमोच च मूर्च्छिताम् ॥ २४ ॥
सा पादमूले कैकेय्या मन्थरा निपपात ह । निःश्वसन्ती सुदुःखार्ता कृपणं विललाप ह ॥ २५ ॥
शत्रुघ्नविक्षेपविमूढसंज्ञां समीक्ष्य कुब्जां भरतस्य माता ।
शनैः समाश्वासयदार्तरूपां क्रौञ्चीं विलग्नामिव वीक्षमाणाम् ॥ २६ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डेऽष्टसप्ततितमः सर्गः ॥ ७८ ॥

Perceiving Śatrughna enraged, Bharata spoke to him as follows:—"Women are undeserving of death at the hands of all men. Let her be forgiven as such. (21) I (myself) would have slain this sinful Kaikeyī of vicious conduct had it not been for the fact that the pious Śrī Rāma is sure to get angry with me for my having killed my (own) mother. (22) (Nay) Śrī Rāma, whose mind is given to piety, will surely never speak not only with you but also with me if he (ultimately) comes to know even of this humpback having been killed (by us)." (23) Hearing the admonition of Bharata, Śatrughna, the younger brother of Lakṣmaṇa, desisted from the aforesaid crime and left her (almost) unconscious. (24) The notorious Mantharā, it is said, fell at the soles of Kaikeyī's feet. (Nay) drawing a deep audible breath expressive of sadness, sore stricken as she was with sorrow, she piteously wailed: so the tradition goes. (25) Perceiving the humpback stunned because of her having been dragged to and fro by Śatrughna, and wearing a wretched look and looking on her boss like a female crane released from captivity, Bharata's mother slowly calmed her. (26)

Thus ends Canto Seventy-eight in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

एकोनाशीतितमः सर्गः

Canto LXXIX

On the fourteenth day the foremost of counsellors entreat Bharata to accept the throne. Turning down their entreaty, Bharata, who is keen to bring Śrī Rāma back to Ayodhya, urges them to detail expert engineers to construct a road, bridges and causeways etc. to facilitate his journey to the place of Śrī Rāma's abode.

ततः प्रभातसमये दिवसेऽथ चतुर्दशे । समेत्य राजकर्तारो भरतं वाक्यमब्रुवन् ॥ १ ॥
गतो दशरथः स्वर्गं यो नो गुरुतरो गुरुः । रामं प्रव्राज्य वै ज्येष्ठं लक्ष्मणं च महाबलम् ॥ २ ॥
त्वमद्य भव नो राजा राजपुत्र महायशः । संगत्या नापराध्नोति राज्यमेतदनायकम् ॥ ३ ॥
आभिषेचनिकं सर्वमिदमादाय राघव । प्रतीक्षते त्वां स्वजनः श्रेणयश्च नृपात्मज ॥ ४ ॥
राज्यं गृहाण भरत पितृपैतामहं ध्रुवम् । अभिषेचय चात्मानं पाहि चास्मान् नरर्षभ ॥ ५ ॥
आभिषेचनिकं भाण्डं कृत्वा सर्वं प्रदक्षिणम् । भरतस्तं जनं सर्वं प्रत्युवाच धृतव्रतः ॥ ६ ॥

Coming together on the fourteenth day at daybreak, the king's counsellors forthwith spoke to Bharata as follows:—(1) "Alas, having sent into exile his eldest son (Śrī Rāma) as well as Lakṣmaṇa, who is possessed of extraordinary might, Daśaratha, who was our most venerable sovereign, has ascended to heaven. (2) This kingdom being without a ruler, be you our ruler now, O highly illustrious prince ! There being justification (for your assuming the reins of government because your elder brother has been exiled under the command of your father and you have been nominated by him as his successor) you are not to blame (for superseding the claims of your brother). (3) Taking all these requisites for your consecration, O scion of Raghu, your own people (the counsellors and ministers) as well as the citizens are awaiting your pleasure, O prince ! (4) Accept the throne (of Ayodhya), which has surely been inherited by you from your father and grandfather, O Bharata, and have yourself consecrated and (thereby) protect us, O jewel among men !" (5) Going clockwise (as a mark of respect) round all the requisites for consecration, Bharata, who had taken the vow of propitiating Śrī Rāma, replied to all those counsellors (as follows):—(6)

ज्येष्ठस्य राजता नित्यमुचिता हि कुलस्य नः । नैवं भवन्तो मां वक्तुमर्हन्ति कुशला जनाः ॥ ७ ॥
रामः पूर्वो हि नो भ्राता भविष्यति महीपतिः । अहं त्वरण्ये वत्स्यामि वर्षाणि नव पञ्च च ॥ ८ ॥
युज्यतां महती सेना चतुरङ्गमहाबला । आनयिष्याम्यहं ज्येष्ठं भ्रातरं राघवं वनात् ॥ ९ ॥
आभिषेचनिकं चैव सर्वमेतदुपस्कृतम् । पुरस्कृत्य गमिष्यामि रामहेतोर्वनं प्रति ॥ १० ॥
तत्रैव तं नरव्याघ्रमभिषिच्य पुरस्कृतम् । आनयिष्यामि वै रामं हव्यवाहमिवाध्वरात् ॥ ११ ॥
न सकामां करिष्यामि स्वामिमां मातृगन्धिनीम् । वने वत्स्याम्यहं दुर्गे रामो राजा भविष्यति ॥ १२ ॥
क्रियतां शिल्पिभिः पन्थाः समानि विषमाणि च । रक्षिणश्चानुसंयान्तु पथि दुर्गविचारकाः ॥ १३ ॥

"Since (the practice of) conferring the kingship on the eldest brother has ever been regarded as commendable in our race, you, who are (all) clever people, ought not to make such a request to me. (7) Śrī Rāma will be the ruler of the earth, since he is our eldest brother. I for my part shall reside in the forest for nine years and five (on his behalf). (8) Let a large and exceptionally powerful army consisting of (all) the four limbs be got ready (to accompany me to the forest). I shall bring back (in state) my elder brother, Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) from the forest. (9) Placing in the van all these requisites got together for the consecration ceremony, I shall proceed in the direction of the forest in order to meet Śrī Rāma. (10) Having consecrated that tiger among men in the forest itself I shall surely bring Śrī Rāma (back to Ayodhya) with honour (even) as one would bring a sacred fire from a (big) fire-sanctuary (to one's own house). (11) I shall not allow this so-called mother of mine to realize her ambition (of seeing her son crowned king). I shall (on the contrary) reside in a forest difficult to cross, while Śrī Rāma will be crowned king. (12) Let a passage be carved by masons (where there is none), let uneven roads be levelled, and let guards knowing the difficult and narrow passages duly follow us." (13)

एवं सम्भाषमाणं तं रामहेतोर्नृपात्मजम् । प्रत्युवाच जनः सर्वः श्रीमद् वाक्यमनुत्तमम् ॥ १४ ॥
एवं ते भाषमाणस्य पद्मा श्रीरुपतिष्ठताम् । यस्त्वं ज्येष्ठे नृपसुते पृथिवीं दातुमिच्छसि ॥ १५ ॥

अनुत्तमं तद्वचनं नृपात्मजः प्रभाषितं संश्रवणे निशम्य च ।
प्रहर्षजास्तं प्रति बाष्पबिन्दवो निपेतुरार्याननत्रेत्रसम्भवाः ॥ १६ ॥
ऊचुस्ते वचनमिदं निशम्य हृष्टाः सामात्याः सपरिषदो वियातशोकाः ।
पन्थानं नरवर भक्तिमाञ्जनश्च व्यादिष्टस्तव वचनाच्च शिल्पिवर्गः ॥ १७ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे एकोनाशीतितमः सर्गः ॥ ७९ ॥

To the above mentioned prince (Bharata), who was talking as aforesaid in the interest of Śrī Rāma, all the counsellors made the following agreeable and excellent reply:—(14) "Let the Goddess of Fortune, known by the name of Padmā (so called because She has Her abode in a bed of lotuses), (ever) be with you, who are speaking in this strain and seek to restore (the sovereignty of) the globe to the eldest prince (Śrī Rāma) !" (15) The prince (Bharata) rejoiced to hear the excellent benediction poured by the counsellors into his ears. Nay, tear-drops born of excessive delight and gratitude towards them flowed from the eyes of Bharata, whose countenance (too) was lit up with joy. (16) Rejoiced to hear the aforesaid proposal (of Bharata to proceed to the forest to bring back Śrī Rāma to Ayodhya after consecrating him as king in the forest itself) the counsellors including the ministers as well as those invited to take part in the assembly found their grief altogether vanished and said, "In obedience to your command, O jewel among men, engineers as well as guards, who are full of devotion (to you as well as to Śrī Rāma), have been told off to prepare the way." (17)

Thus ends Canto Seventy-nine in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

अशीतितमः सर्गः

Canto LXXX

The engineers detailed by Bharata's ministers construct a broad passage from Ayodhya to the bank of the Ganga and render it easy to tread by erecting pavilions and digging wells here and there on the roadside.

अथ भूमिप्रदेशज्ञाः सूत्रकर्मविशारदाः । स्वकर्माभिरताः शूराः खनका यन्त्रकास्तथा ॥ १ ॥
कर्मान्तिकाः स्थपतयः पुरुषा यन्त्रकोविदाः । तथा वर्धकयश्चैव मार्गिणो वृक्षतक्षकाः ॥ २ ॥
सूपकाराः सुधाकारा वंशचर्मकृतस्तथा । समर्था ये च द्रष्टारः पुरतश्च प्रतस्थिरे ॥ ३ ॥
स तु हर्षात् तमुद्देशं जनौघो विपुलः प्रयान् । अशोभत महावेगः सागरस्येव पर्वणि ॥ ४ ॥
ते स्ववारं समास्थाय वर्त्मकर्मणि कोविदाः । करणैर्विविधोपेतैः पुरस्तात् सम्प्रतस्थिरे ॥ ५ ॥
लता वल्लीश्च गुल्मांश्च स्थाणूनश्मन एव च । जनास्ते चक्रिरे मार्गं छिन्दन्तो विविधान् द्रुमान् ॥ ६ ॥

Now men expert in divining the presence of subterranean water in a given plot of land, those adept in designing buildings, pavilions etc., gallant men vigilant in their duty (of guarding the roadways), workmen expert in sinking wells and digging tunnels etc., mechanics contriving devices for

crossing streams etc. or obstructing the flow of water, paid labourers, architects, men expert in making catapults etc., even so carpenters, those entrusted with the duty of clearing or guarding the way, hewers of trees and cooks, men expert in plastering and white-washing etc., those preparing mats and winnowing fans etc. from bamboos and making articles of leather (such as saddles), and capable guides set forth in advance. (1—3) Marching with joy to the region where Śrī Rāma was sojourning, that huge multitude of men really shone like a great upsurge of the ocean on a full moon. (4) Seeking the company of their own confreres, men skilled in constructing roads etc. marched ahead with implements of various kinds. (5) Removing boughs of trees as well as creepers and shrubs, stumps and rocks too and cutting down trees of every description (that obstructed the way), those men hewed out a path. (6)

अवृक्षेषु च देशेषु केचिद् वृक्षानरोपयन् । केचित् कुठारैष्टङ्कैश्च दात्रैश्छिन्दन् क्वचित् क्वचित् ॥ ७ ॥
अपरे वीरणस्तम्बान् बलिनो बलवत्तराः । विधमन्ति स्म दुर्गाणि स्थलानि च ततस्ततः ॥ ८ ॥
अपरेऽपूरयन् कूपान् पांसुभिः श्वभ्रमायतम् । निम्नभागांस्तथैवाशु समांश्चक्रुः समन्ततः ॥ ९ ॥
बबन्धुर्बन्धनीयांश्च क्षोद्यान् संचुक्षुदुस्तथा । बिभिदुर्भेदनीयांश्च तांस्तान् देशान् नरास्तदा ॥ १० ॥
अचिरेण तु कालेन परिवाहान् बहूदकान् । चक्रुर्बहुविधाकारान् सागरप्रतिमान् बहून् ॥ ११ ॥
निर्जलेषु च देशेषु खानयामासुरुत्तमान् । उदपानान् बहुविधान् वेदिकापरिमण्डितान् ॥ १२ ॥
ससुधाकुट्टिमतलः प्रपुष्पितमहीरुहः । मत्तोद्घुष्टद्विजगणः पताकाभिरलंकृतः ॥ १३ ॥
चन्दनोदकसंसिक्तो नानाकुसुमभूषितः । बह्वशोभत सेनायाः पन्थाः सुरपथोपमः ॥ १४ ॥

Nay, some men raised trees in treeless areas (for providing shade); while others hewed the existing ones here and there by means of axes, hatchets and sickles. (7) (Still) others, who were stronger than the rest, tore by the roots (with their own hands) tufts of Vīraṇa grass (a fragrant grass), that had got firmly rooted, and levelled uneven stretches of land at different places. (8) Others filled (waterless) wells (covered with grass etc., that fell on the way) as well as extensive pits with earth. Similarly they levelled low-lying lands all round in no time. (9) On that occasion the workmen bridged the streams that could be bridged, and likewise crushed the pebbles etc. that could be crushed and smashed the impediments that (obstructed the passage of water and) were worth smashing. (10) (By constructing dams) they actually turned in a short time rivulets into many ponds of various sizes and shapes, containing plentiful water and resembling seas. (11) Nay, in waterless tracts they caused to be sunk excellent wells of every description embellished with platforms (for people to sit on). (12) The highway carved out for the army (to pass along) was paved with concrete mixed with lime and lined with trees laden with blossoms. Flocks of birds excited with sexual passion and giving out shrill cries were seen on those trees and the road was (also) decorated with buntings. The road, which was sprinkled with water mixed with sandal paste, and adorned with flowers of various kinds, looked most charming like a pathway of gods. (13-14)

आज्ञाप्याथ यथाज्ञप्ति युक्तास्तेऽधिकृता नराः । रमणीयेषु देशेषु बहुस्वादुफलेषु च ॥ १५ ॥
यो निवेशस्त्वभिप्रेतो भरतस्य महात्मनः । भूयस्तं शोभयामासुर्भूषाभिर्भूषणोपमम् ॥ १६ ॥
नक्षत्रेषु प्रशस्तेषु मुहूर्तेषु च तद्विदः । निवेशान् स्थापयामासुर्भरतस्य महात्मनः ॥ १७ ॥

बहुपांसुचयाश्चापि परिखाः परिवारिताः । तत्रेन्द्रनीलप्रतिमाः प्रतोलीवरशोभिताः ॥ १८ ॥
प्रासादमालासंयुक्ताः सौधप्राकारसंवृताः । पताकाशोभिताः सर्वे सुनिर्मितमहापथाः ॥ १९ ॥
विसर्पद्भिरिवाकाशे विटङ्काग्रविमानकैः । समुच्छ्रितैर्निवेशास्ते बभुः शक्रपुरोपमाः ॥ २० ॥
जाह्नवीं तु समासाद्य विविधद्रुमकाननाम् । शीतलामलपानीयां महामीनसमाकुलाम् ॥ २१ ॥
सचन्द्रतारागणमण्डितं यथा नभः क्षपायाममलं विराजते ।
नरेन्द्रमार्गः स तदा व्यराजत क्रमेण रम्यः शुभशिल्पिनिर्मितः ॥ २२ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डेऽशीतितमः सर्गः ॥ ८० ॥

Nay, having given orders (to the workers to fix tents etc.) as enjoined (by Bharata), the aforesaid officers (entrusted with the work of fixing tents etc.), who were (all) alert, got tents pitched forthwith in delightful areas abounding in luscious fruits. They further adorned with decorations the tent which was liked by the high-souled Bharata and in itself resembled an ornament. (15-16) The knowers of (the science of) architecture consecrated the camps erected for the high-souled Bharata at auspicious hours on days when the stars were propitious. (17) Many heaps of earth were raised and moats too excavated round these camps. Enclosed by those moats stood tents containing images of sapphire and adorned with excellent lanes. (18) Accompanied by rows of temples, the camps were bounded by enclosures whitewashed with lime. They were all decorated with buntings and divided by well-designed roads. (19) Standing side by side with seven-storeyed mansions, the tops of which were provided with dove-cots and which flew about as it were in the air, the said camps shone like (so many) capitals of Indra. (20) Extending up to the bank of the (holy) Ganga (foster-daughter of King Jahnu),—which was hemmed in with forests consisting of trees of every description, was full of cool and limpid waters and infested with large fishes,—that delightful road, constructed in gradual stages by capable engineers, looked very charming at that time (even) as a cloudless sky adorned with a host of stars accompanied by the moon during the night. (21-22)

Thus ends Canto Eighty in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

एकाशीतितमः सर्गः

Canto LXXXI

The king's bards, panegyrists and minstrels having commenced eulogizing Bharata in the customary way in the midst of festal music at sunrise the following morning, Bharata stops it, disclaiming sovereignty, and complains to Śatrughna of the ill turn done to the world by his own mother. In the meantime Sage Vasiṣṭha enters the royal court and sends messengers to Bharata urging him to be present in the court; and in response to his call Bharata, accompanied by Śatrughna and others, enters the assembly.

ततो नान्दीमुखीं रात्रिं भरतं सूतमागधाः । तुष्टुवुः सविशेषज्ञाः स्तवैर्मङ्गलसंस्तवैः ॥ १ ॥

सुवर्णकोणाभिहतः प्राणदद् यामदुन्दुभिः । दध्मुः शङ्खांश्च शतशो वाद्यांश्चोच्चावचस्वरान् ॥ २ ॥
स तूर्यघोषः सुमहान् दिवमापूरयन्निव । भरतं शोकसंतप्तं भूयः शोकैररन्धयत् ॥ ३ ॥
ततः प्रबुद्धो भरतस्तं घोषं संनिवर्त्य च । नाहं राजेति चोक्त्वा तं शत्रुघ्नमिदमब्रवीत् ॥ ४ ॥
पश्य शत्रुघ्न कैकेय्या लोकस्यापकृतं महत् । विसृज्य मयि दुःखानि राजा दशरथो गतः ॥ ५ ॥
तस्यैषा धर्मराजस्य धर्ममूला महात्मनः । परिभ्रमति राजश्रीर्नौरिवाकर्णिका जले ॥ ६ ॥
यो हि नः सुमहान् नाथः सोऽपि प्रव्राजितो वने । अनया धर्ममुत्सृज्य मात्रा मे राघवः स्वयम् ॥ ७ ॥
इत्येवं भरतं वीक्ष्य विलपन्तमचेतनम् । कृपणा रुरुदुः सर्वाः सुस्वरं योषितस्तदा ॥ ८ ॥

Seeing the night preceding the Nāndīmukha* and other festal ceremonies (proposed to be performed by Vasiṣṭha preliminary to Bharata's coronation the following morning) approaching its end, the bards and panegyrists well-versed in eulogizing kings and princes on special occasions extolled Bharata by means of benedictory encomia. (1) Struck with a gold stick, the drum which was beaten (at regular hours) to notify the end of every quarter of the day sounded loudly. Nay, the servants blew conches and sounded hundreds of musical instruments of various pitches. (2) Filling the space on all sides as it were, that very loud sound of musical instruments further oppressed with grief Bharata, who was (already) tormented with grief. (3) Causing that music to be completely stopped the moment he was roused as a result of it, and saying that he was not the ruler, spoke to the celebrated Śatrughna as follows:—(4) "See, O Śatrughna, the great wrong that has been done to the world by Kaikeyī. (And) leaving (a legacy of) sufferings to my share, King Daśaratha (too) has departed (from this world). (5) This royal fortune, rooted in righteousness, of that high-souled monarch, who was an embodiment of piety, is drifting like a boat without a pilot in water. (6) Even the celebrated Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu), who was undoubtedly our very great protector and lord, has been sent in exile to the forest by this very mother of mine casting righteousness to the winds." (7) Perceiving Bharata lamenting as aforesaid in a distracted state of mind at that (critical) moment, all the women (present in the gynaeceum) piteously wailed at the top of their voice. (8)

तथा तस्मिन् विलपति वसिष्ठो राजधर्मवित् । सभामिक्ष्वाकुनाथस्य प्रविवेश महायशाः ॥ ९ ॥
शातकुम्भमयीं रम्यां मणिरत्नसमाकुलाम् । सुधर्मामिव धर्मात्मा सगणः प्रत्यपद्यत ॥ १० ॥
स काञ्चनमयं पीठं स्वस्त्यास्तरणसंवृतम् । अध्यास्त सर्ववेदज्ञो दूताननुशशास च ॥ ११ ॥
ब्राह्मणान् क्षत्रियान् योधानमात्यान् गणवल्लभान् । क्षिप्रमानयताव्यग्राः कृत्यमात्ययिकं हि नः ॥ १२ ॥
सराजपुत्रं शत्रुघ्नं भरतं च यशस्विनम् । युधाजितं सुमन्त्रं च ये च तत्र हिता जनाः ॥ १३ ॥
ततो हलहलाशब्दो महान् समुदपद्यत । रथैरश्वैर्गजैश्चापि जनानामुपगच्छताम् ॥ १४ ॥
ततो भरतमायान्तं शतक्रतुमिवामराः । प्रत्यनन्दन् प्रकृतयो यथा दशरथं तथा ॥ १५ ॥
ह्रद इव तिमिनागसंवृतः स्तिमितजलो मणिशङ्खशर्करः ।
दशरथसुतशोभिता सभा सदशरथेव बभूव सा पुरा ॥ १६ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे एकाशीतितमः सर्गः ॥ ८१ ॥

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* The name of a Śrāddha offered at the beginning of a festive occasion to one's departed ancestors to secure their blessings.

While Bharata was wailing as mentioned above, the highly illustrious Sage Vasiṣṭha, who was well-versed in the code of conduct prescribed for kings, entered the court of King Daśaratha (the ruler of the Ikṣwākus). (9) Accompanied by his host of pupils, the sage, whose mind was given to piety, got into the delightful council-chamber, which was mostly built of gold and studded all over with pearls and precious stones (of various kinds) and looked like Sudharmā (the court of Indra, the lord of paradise). (10) The sage, who had mastered all the Vedas, occupied a seat of gold covered by a cloth bearing the design of swastika (denoting good luck), and commanded the messengers (as follows): so the tradition goes:—(11) "Since there is some urgent business to be disposed of by us, please bring (hither) promptly and quietly Brahmans, Kṣatriyas, warriors, ministers, troop commanders, Śatrughna and the illustrious Bharata with (other) princes, Yudhājit (one of the chief counsellors, nicknamed Vijaya) and Sumantra as well as (all other) people who are friendly to Bharata " (12-13) A great noise then burst forth from men approaching in chariots as well as on horseback and on elephants. (14) The ministers and counsellors as well as the people cheered Bharata coming (to the council-chamber) as they used to greet Daśaratha and (even) as gods would greet Indra (who is believed to have performed a hundred Aśwamedha sacrifices as a condition precedent for his assuming the position of Indra). (15) Resembling a pool* (in the sea), having still waters and infested with Timis (a kind of fish credited with a length and breadth of many leagues) and sea-elephants and full of gems, conches and dust of gold, the aforesaid court graced with (the august presence of) Bharata (son of Daśaratha) looked as it did when adorned with (the presence of) Daśaratha in the past. (16)

Thus ends Canto Eighty-one in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

द्व्यशीतितमः सर्गः

Canto LXXXII

Sage Vasiṣṭha urges Bharata to accept the kingdom bequeathed to him by his father and elder brother. Bharata, however, scornfully declines the offer and takes a solemn pledge to depart for the forest and try his level best to bring his elder brother back to Ayodhya. At his instance Sumantra gets a chariot ready to take him to the forest and brings the chariot to his presence.

तामार्यगणसम्पूर्णां भरतः प्रग्रहां सभाम् । ददर्श बुद्धिसम्पन्नः पूर्णचन्द्रां निशामिव ॥ १ ॥

* In this simile the figures of Timis and sea-elephants painted on the floor of the council-chamber are compared to aquatic creatures of the same name figuring in the sea, the sheen of the glittering pavement of the chamber to the still waters of the sea, the gems with which the floor is inlaid with those embedded in the depths of a sea, the figures of conches figuring in the pavement to conch-shells found in sea-beds and the gold coating on the floor to the dust of gold found in gold mines in the bowels of a sea.

आसनानि यथान्यायमार्याणां विशतां तदा । वस्त्राङ्गरागप्रभया द्योतिता सा सभोत्तमा ॥ २ ॥
सा विद्वज्जनसम्पूर्णा सभा सुरुचिरा तथा । अदृश्यत घनापाये पूर्णचन्द्रेव शर्वरी ॥ ३ ॥
राज्ञस्तु प्रकृतीः सर्वाः स सम्प्रेक्ष्य च धर्मवित् । इदं पुरोहितो वाक्यं भरतं मृदु चाब्रवीत् ॥ ४ ॥
तात राजा दशरथः स्वर्गतो धर्ममाचरन् । धनधान्यवतीं स्फीतां प्रदाय पृथिवीं तव ॥ ५ ॥
रामस्तथा सत्यवृत्तिः सतां धर्ममनुस्मरन् । नाजहात् पितुरादेशं शशी ज्योत्स्नामिवोदितः ॥ ६ ॥
पित्रा भ्रात्रा च ते दत्तं राज्यं निहतकण्टकम् । तद् भुङ्क्ष्व मुदितामात्यः क्षिप्रमेवाभिषेचय ॥ ७ ॥
उदीच्याश्च प्रतीच्याश्च दाक्षिणात्याश्च केवलाः । कोट्यापरान्ताः सामुद्रा रत्नान्युपहरन्तु ते ॥ ८ ॥

Bharata, who was rich in intelligence, beheld the aforesaid assembly, full of hosts of worthy men and attended by great souls (like Vasiṣṭha) and (as such) resembling a night illumined by a full moon and adorned with (other) major planets. (1) That eminent gathering was lit up with the splendour of the raiment worn and the pigment painted on the person of the worthies occupying their seats according to their deserts on that occasion. (2) That most brilliant conclave looked as charming as a night illumined by a full moon during the autumn (marked by the absence of clouds). (3) Looking intently on and reading the mind of all the king's ministers and the people (present there), the said Vasiṣṭha (the family priest of the rulers of Ayodhya), for his part, who knows what is right, spoke as follows and gently (too) to Bharata:—(4) "King Daśaratha, my child, has ascended to heaven practising virtue (in the form of redeeming his plighted word) and bequeathing (the sovereignty of) the prosperous earth, full of gold and food-grains, to you. (5) Bearing in mind the duty of virtuous souls (*viz*, obeying the command of their parents), Śrī Rāma, who is truthful of conduct like his father, did not disregard the command of his father any more than the risen moon quits the moonlight. (6) Sovereignty with (all) its thorns completely removed has been conferred on you by your father and (elder) brother. Assisted by ministers who are (all) pleased (with you), enjoy it and quickly get yourself consecrated (for the coronation). (7) Let the rulers of the north and the west as well as of the south and the east and the kings of the western borders near the Sahya mountains, who are without a throne (and therefore not enjoying sovereign rights), as well as seafaring traders bring countless jewels as offerings to you." (8)

तच्छ्रुत्वा भरतो वाक्यं शोकेनाभिपरिप्लुतः । जगाम मनसा रामं धर्मज्ञो धर्मकाङ्क्षया ॥ ९ ॥
सबाष्पकलया वाचा कलहंसस्वरो युवा । विललाप सभामध्ये जगर्हे च पुरोहितम् ॥ १० ॥
चरितब्रह्मचर्यस्य विद्यास्नातस्य धीमतः । धर्मे प्रयतमानस्य को राज्यं मद्विधो हरेत् ॥ ११ ॥
कथं दशरथाज्जातो भवेद् राज्यापहारकः । राज्यं चाहं च रामस्य धर्मं वक्तुमिहार्हसि ॥ १२ ॥
ज्येष्ठः श्रेष्ठश्च धर्मात्मा दिलीपनहुषोपमः । लब्धुमर्हति काकुत्स्थो राज्यं दशरथो यथा ॥ १३ ॥
अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यं कुर्यां पापमहं यदि । इक्ष्वाकूणामहं लोके भवेयं कुलपांसनः ॥ १४ ॥
यद्धि मात्रा कृतं पापं नाहं तदपि रोचये । इहस्थो वनदुर्गस्थं नमस्यामि कृताञ्जलिः ॥ १५ ॥
राममेवानुगच्छामि स राजा द्विपदां वरः । त्रयाणामपि लोकानां राघवो राज्यमर्हति ॥ १६ ॥

Overwhelmed with grief to hear the aforesaid advice (of his family priest), Bharata, who knew the right course (*viz*, to restore the kingdom to his elder brother), mentally betook himself to Śrī Rāma with intent (to get inspiration from him) to do the right thing (in the shape of waiting as a

servant on his elder brother rather than superseding his claim to the throne). (9) In a voice choked with tears, the prince, who was in the prime of his youth (and therefore incapable of renunciation), lamented (as follows) in the open assembly in tones resembling the cackling of a swan and reproached his family priest (for his unjust advice and offering the kingship to a cruel and unrighteous fellow like himself)—(10) "What (sensible and knowing) man like me can usurp the kingdom of a sagacious prince (like Śrī Rāma) who has (duly) studied the Vedas with a vow of celibacy (in the house of a teacher) and gone through the ceremony of lustration after completing his studies and is applying himself to (the practice of) virtue (in the shape of redeeming the plighted word of his father) ? (11) How can I, sprung from the loins of Daśaratha (who renounced his very life on being told that Śrī Rāma had not returned to Ayodhya and had left for the forest), become a usurper of the throne (of my elder brother), when not only the throne but I too belong to Śrī Rāma ? (Therefore) in this conclave you ought to speak what is right. (12) Śrī Rāma (a scion of Kakutstha), who is not only the eldest (of us all) but the worthiest (too), whose mind is intent on piety and who vies (in eminence) with Dilīpa and Nahuṣa (two most ancient and illustrious representatives of the solar and the lunar dynasty respectively) deserves to inherit the kingdom as did Daśaratha (in the past). (13) If I perpetrate this sin (of superseding the claims of my elder brother), which is resorted to (only) by unworthy men and does not lead to heaven, I shall bring disgrace to the line of Ikṣwāku in the world. (14) I do not even approve of (much less be a party to) the sinful act (in the shape of disinheriting and banishing Śrī Rāma) that has actually been committed by my mother. (That is why) even though present here, I salute with joined palms Śrī Rāma sojourning in a forest region difficult of access. (15) I shall (therefore) follow Śrī Rāma alone. Being the foremost of men, he (alone) is the ruler (of this kingdom). (Nay) Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) deserves the sovereignty even of (all) the three worlds (*viz*, earth, heaven and the intermediate region)." (16)

तद्वाक्यं धर्मसंयुक्तं श्रुत्वा सर्वे सभासदः । हर्षान्मुमुचुरश्रूणि रामे निहितचेतसः ॥ १७ ॥
यदि त्वार्यं न शक्ष्यामि विनिवर्तयितुं वनात् । वने तत्रैव वत्स्यामि यथाऽऽर्यो लक्ष्मणस्तथा ॥ १८ ॥
सर्वोपायं तु वर्तिष्ये विनिवर्तयितुं बलात् । समक्षमार्यमिश्राणां साधूनां गुणवर्तिनाम् ॥ १९ ॥
विष्टिकर्मान्तिकाः सर्वे मार्गशोधकदक्षकाः । प्रस्थापिता मया पूर्वं यात्रा च मम रोचते ॥ २० ॥
एवमुक्त्वा तु धर्मात्मा भरतो भ्रातृवत्सलः । समीपस्थमुवाचेदं सुमन्त्रं मन्त्रकोविदम् ॥ २१ ॥
तूर्णमुत्थाय गच्छ त्वं सुमन्त्र मम शासनात् । यात्रामाज्ञापय क्षिप्रं बलं चैव समानय ॥ २२ ॥
एवमुक्तः सुमन्त्रस्तु भरतेन महात्मना । प्रहृष्टः सोऽदिशत् सर्वं यथासंदिष्टमिष्टवत् ॥ २३ ॥
ताः प्रहृष्टाः प्रकृतयो बलाध्यक्षा बलस्य च । श्रुत्वा यात्रां समाज्ञप्तां राघवस्य निवर्तने ॥ २४ ॥

Hearing the aforesaid reply, which was in full accord with righteousness, all those who sat in the assembly shed tears through joy, their mind being absorbed in Śrī Rāma. (17) "If, however, (Bharata continued) I do not succeed in bringing my elder brother back from the forest, I shall continue in that forest itself in the same way as the noble Lakṣmaṇa is doing. (18) In the presence of the (honourable) members of this assembly,

who are (all) impartial and practise good virtues, I for my part shall try every means to bring him back forcibly. (19) All expert road-clearers working on and without wages have already been despatched by me. (Hence) journeying (to the forest) alone finds favour with me." (20) Having spoken thus, the pious-minded Bharata for his part, who was (so) fond of his (elder) brother, spoke as follows to Sumantra, who sat near him and was clever in giving counsel:—(21) "Getting up at once, O Sumantra, depart you under my command and issue orders (to all) to proceed on a journey (to the place where Śrī Rāma may be) and quickly send out the army too." (22) Sumantra for his part felt highly rejoiced when commanded in the foregoing words by the high-souled Bharata. He communicated (to all) everything as instructed (by Bharata) as something welcome. (23) The citizens present in the assembly as well as the generals were immensely delighted to hear of the departure (to the forest) of the army duly ordered (by Bharata) with the object of bringing Śrī Rāma back (to Ayodhya). (24)

ततो योधाङ्गनाः सर्वा भर्तॄन् सर्वान् गृहे गृहे । यात्रागमनमाज्ञाय त्वरयन्ति स्म हर्षिताः ॥ २५ ॥
ते हयैर्गोरथैः शीघ्रं स्यन्दनैश्च मनोजवैः । सहयोषिद् बलाध्यक्षा बलं सर्वमचोदयन् ॥ २६ ॥
सज्जं तु तद् बलं दृष्ट्वा भरतो गुरुसंनिधौ । रथं मे त्वरयस्वेति सुमन्त्रं पार्श्वतोऽब्रवीत् ॥ २७ ॥
भरतस्य तु तस्याज्ञां परिगृह्य प्रहर्षितः । रथं गृहीत्वोपययौ युक्तं परमवाजिभिः ॥ २८ ॥

स राघवः सत्यधृतिः प्रतापवान् ब्रुवन् सुयुक्तं दृढसत्यविक्रमः ।
गुरुं महारण्यगतं यशस्विनं प्रसादयिष्यन् भरतोऽब्रवीत् तदा ॥ २९ ॥
तूर्णं त्वमुत्थाय सुमन्त्र गच्छ बलस्य योगाय बलप्रधानान् ।
आनेतुमिच्छामि हि तं वनस्थं प्रसाद्य रामं जगतो हिताय ॥ ३० ॥
स सूतपुत्रो भरतेन सम्यगाज्ञापितः सम्परिपूर्णकामः ।
शशास सर्वान् प्रकृतिप्रधानान् बलस्य मुख्यांश्च सुहृज्जनं च ॥ ३१ ॥
ततः समुत्थाय कुले कुले ते राजन्यवैश्या वृषलाश्च विप्राः ।
अयूयुजन्नुष्ट्ररथान् खरांश्च नागान् हयांश्चैव कुलप्रसूतान् ॥ ३२ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे द्व्यशीतितमः सर्गः ॥ ८२ ॥

Delighted to know of the expedition (of the army) on a pilgrimage (to the forest to bring back Śrī Rāma), all the wives of soldiers thereupon urged (in their eagerness to see Śrī Rāma and others back in Ayodhya) all the husbands in their own homes to make haste (to depart). (25) The aforesaid generals urged the entire army to march quickly with the womenfolk, on horseback, in bullock-carts as well as in chariots quick as thought. (26) Seeing that army ready (to depart), Bharata for his part said to Sumantra, standing by his side, in the presence of his preceptor (Sage Vasiṣṭha), "Get my chariot ready soon." (27) Bowing to the command of the celebrated Bharata and taking a chariot driven by excellent horses, Sumantra for his part approached him highly delighted (at the prospect of meeting Śrī Rāma and others as well as of their returning to Ayodhya). (28) Intending (to undertake a journey) to persuade his illustrious elder brother (Śrī Rāma), staying in a dreary forest (*viz*, the Daṇḍaka), to return (to Ayodhya) by arguing (with him) in a well-reasoned way, that glorious scion of Raghu, Bharata of unfailing firmness and unflinching veracity and prowess, spoke on that occasion (as follows):—

(29) "Getting up promptly, O Sumantra, approach you the generals of the army in order to get them equip the forces (for the journey), for, propitiating Śrī Rāma residing in the forest, I intend to bring him (back to Ayodhya) for the good of the world." (30) Commanded (as above) by Bharata and accounting (thereby) his ambition (of seeing Śrī Rāma) fully realized, Sumantra duly issued orders (accordingly) to all the leading citizens and army chiefs as well as to the friends and relations of Bharata. (31) Springing on their feet (in great eagerness) people from every house,—Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas, Śūdras and Brahmans,—thereupon got ready (for the journey) camels and chariots, donkeys and elephants, as well as horses of excellent breed. (32)

Thus ends Canto Eighty-two in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

त्र्यशीतितमः सर्गः

Canto LXXXIII

Leaving the capital early next morning, accompanied by the family priests, artisans, army and the citizens, and covering a long distance, Bharata reaches the bank of the holy Ganga at Śṛṅgaverapura ruled by Guha and, encamping the army, breaks journey in order to do Śrāddha and Tarpaṇa in honour of his deceased father on the bank of the Ganga and also to give rest to his followers.

ततः समुत्थितः कल्यमास्थाय स्यन्दनोत्तमम् । प्रययौ भरतः शीघ्रं रामदर्शनकाम्यया ॥ १ ॥
अग्रतः प्रययुस्तस्य सर्वे मन्त्रिपुरोहिताः । अधिरुह्य हयैर्युक्तान् रथान् सूर्यरथोपमान् ॥ २ ॥
नवनागसहस्राणि कल्पितानि यथाविधि । अन्वयुर्भरतं यान्तमिक्ष्वाकुकुलनन्दनम् ॥ ३ ॥
षष्ठी रथसहस्राणि धन्विनो विविधायुधाः । अन्वयुर्भरतं यान्तं राजपुत्रं यशस्विनम् ॥ ४ ॥
शतं सहस्राण्यश्वानां समारूढानि राघवम् । अन्वयुर्भरतं यान्तं राजपुत्रं यशस्विनम् ॥ ५ ॥
कैकेयी च सुमित्रा च कौसल्या च यशस्विनी । रामानयनसंतुष्टा ययुर्यानेन भास्वता ॥ ६ ॥
प्रयाताश्चार्यसंघाता रामं द्रष्टुं सलक्ष्मणम् । तस्यैव च कथाश्चित्राः कुर्वाणा हृष्टमानसाः ॥ ७ ॥
मेघश्यामं महाबाहुं स्थिरसत्त्वं दृढव्रतम् । कदा द्रक्ष्यामहे रामं जगतः शोकनाशनम् ॥ ८ ॥
दृष्ट एव हि नः शोकमपनेष्यति राघवः । तमः सर्वस्य लोकस्य समुद्यन्निव भास्करः ॥ ९ ॥

Having got up from sleep at daybreak, and mounting an excellent chariot, Bharata forthwith departed with expedition with a longing to see Śrī Rāma. (1) Mounting chariots drawn by horses and vying with the car of the sun-god, all the counsellors and family priests drove ahead of him. (2) Nine thousand elephants duly caparisoned followed Bharata, the delight of Ikṣwāku's race, (even) as he moved on. (3) Sixty thousand chariots and archers armed with varied weapons (seated in them) followed the illustrious Prince Bharata (next) as he advanced. (4) A hundred thousand

horses mounted by cavaliers (next) followed Prince Bharata, an illustrious scion of Raghu, as he proceeded along. (5) Kaikeyī and Sumitrā and the illustrious Kausalyā too, who were highly gratified by the thought of bringing Śrī Rāma (back from the forest) drove in a splendid chariot each. (6) Hosts of members of the twice-born classes also set out with a delighted mind in order (to be able) to see Śrī Rāma along with Lakṣmaṇa (and Sītā) and saying various things about him alone (in the following strain).—(7) "When shall we (be able to) behold the mighty-armed Śrī Rāma, dark-brown as a cloud, stable of mind and firm of resolve, the dispeller of the grief of the world ? (8) As the sun disperses the darkness of the whole world (even) while fully appearing (in the horizon), Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) will surely dispel our grief the moment he is seen (by us)." (9)

इत्येवं कथयन्तस्ते सम्प्रहृष्टाः कथाः शुभाः । परिष्वजानाश्चान्योन्यं ययुर्नागरिकास्तदा ॥ १० ॥
ये च तत्रापरे सर्वे सम्मता ये च नैगमाः । रामं प्रतिययुर्हृष्टाः सर्वाः प्रकृतयः शुभाः ॥ ११ ॥
मणिकाराश्च ये केचित् कुम्भकाराश्च शोभनाः । सूत्रकर्मविशेषज्ञा ये च शस्त्रोपजीविनः ॥ १२ ॥
मायूरकाः क्राकचिका वेधका रोचकास्तथा । दन्तकाराः सुधाकारा येच गन्धोपजीविनः ॥ १३ ॥
सुवर्णकाराः प्रख्यातास्तथा कम्बलकारकाः । स्नापकोष्णोदका वैद्या धूपकाः शौण्डिकास्तथा ॥ १४ ॥
रजकास्तुन्नवायाश्च ग्रामघोषमहत्तराः । शैलूषाश्च सह स्त्रीभिर्यान्ति कैवर्तकास्तथा ॥ १५ ॥
समाहिता वेदविदो ब्राह्मणा वृत्तसम्मताः । गोरथैर्भरतं यान्तमनुजग्मुः सहस्रशः ॥ १६ ॥
सुवेषाः शुद्धवसनास्ताम्रमृष्टानुलेपिनः । सर्वे ते विमलैर्यानैः शनैर्भरतमन्वयुः ॥ १७ ॥
प्रहृष्टमुदिता सेना सान्वयात् कैकयीसुतम् । भ्रातुरानयने यातं भरतं भ्रातृवत्सलम् ॥ १८ ॥

Saying many good things as mentioned above on that occasion and hugging one another, highly rejoiced as they were (over the prospect of being able to see Śrī Rāma), the citizens went forth (to meet Śrī Rāma). (10) Those merchants who were held in great esteem in Ayodhya and all others who were not so honoured and (even so) all (other) good citizens joyously proceeded to meet Śrī Rāma. (11) Whatever lapidaries there were (in the city) and skilled potters, those adept in weaving and those who lived by manufacture of arms, those who made fans etc. of peacock-feathers, those who lived by the saw, those who pierced gems and pearls etc., as well as polishers (of gems, ornaments and utensils etc.), those who made articles of ivory, those who prepared lime (by burning limestone etc.) and those who lived by perfumery, highly reputed goldsmiths and weavers of blankets and other woollen goods, those who provided baths for others, masseurs, physicians, fumigators and distillers and vintners, washermen and tailors, chiefs of villages and hamlets and dancers with their womenfolk as well as boatmen joined the expedition. (12—15) Brahmans remaining absorbed in meditation, well-versed in the Vedas and highly respected for their conduct followed the departing Bharata in thousands on bullock-carts. (16) Decently dressed, clad in pure raiment and having smeared their body with sandal-paste mixed with red substances (like saffron), they all followed slowly in the wake of Bharata on stainless vehicles. (17) Thrilled with joy and delighted in mind, the aforesaid army (too) followed Bharata, the son of Kaikeyī, who was (so) fond of his (elder) brother and set out on the mission of bringing his (said) brother (back from the forest). (18)

ते गत्वा दूरमध्वानं रथयानाश्वकुञ्जरैः । समासेदुस्ततो गङ्गां शृङ्गवेरपुरं प्रति ॥ १९ ॥
यत्र रामसखा वीरो गुहो ज्ञातिगणैर्वृतः । निवसत्यप्रमादेन देशं तं परिपालयन् ॥ २० ॥
उपेत्य तीरं गङ्गायाश्चक्रवाकैरलंकृतम् । व्यवतिष्ठत सा सेना भरतस्यानुयायिनी ॥ २१ ॥
निरीक्ष्यानुत्थितां सेनां तां च गङ्गां शिवोदकाम् । भरतः सचिवान् सर्वानब्रवीद् वाक्यकोविदः ॥ २२ ॥
निवेशयत मे सैन्यमभिप्रायेण सर्वतः । विश्रान्ताः प्रतरिष्यामः श्व इमां सागरंगमाम् ॥ २३ ॥
दातुं च तावदिच्छामि स्वर्गतस्य महीपतेः । और्ध्वदेहनिमित्तार्थमवतीर्योदकं नदीम् ॥ २४ ॥
तस्यैवं ब्रुवतोऽमात्यास्तथेत्युक्त्वा समाहिताः । न्यवेशयंस्तांश्छन्देन स्वेन स्वेन पृथक् पृथक् ॥ २५ ॥
निवेश्य गङ्गामनु तां महानदीं चमूं विधानैः परिबर्हशोभिनीम् ।
उवास रामस्य तदा महात्मनो विचिन्तमानो भरतो निवर्तनम् ॥ २६ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे त्र्यशीतितमः सर्गः ॥ ८३ ॥

Having covered a long distance from Ayodhya in chariots, on palanquins and on the back of horses and elephants, they reached (the bank of) the (holy) Ganga in the precincts of Śṛṅgaverapura, where dwelt the valiant Guha, a friend of Śrī Rāma, surrounded by hosts of his kinsmen and ruling that area with vigilance. (19-20) Having arrived at the bank of the Ganga, adorned by Chakrawāka birds, that army following in the wake of Bharata halted. (21) Seeing the aforesaid army inactive and beholding the Ganga with its holy waters, Bharata, who was a master of expression, spoke to all his ministers (as follows):—(22) "Let my army encamp at will on all sides. Having taken rest (today) we shall cross this sea-bound river tomorrow. (23) In the meantime, descending into the river, I wish to offer (libations of) water to (the spirit of) the emperor (my father), who has ascended to heaven, for happiness in his life after death." (24) Saying "Amen" to Bharata, who was speaking as above, the ministers, who were all attention, encamped the troops separately, each unit according to its liking. (25) Having caused that army, which looked charming with its equipage (in the shape of tents etc.), to encamp methodically along the bank of the great river Ganga, Bharata (too) halted then, reflecting (all the time) how to bring the high-souled Śrī Rāma back (to Ayodhya). (26)

Thus ends Canto Eighty-three in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

चतुरशीतितमः सर्गः

Canto LXXXIV

Scenting mischief in the mind of Bharata, who was taking a large army with him, Guha orders the ferrymen to guard the boats so as to prevent Bharata's men from crossing the Ganga, and himself seeks the presence of Bharata in order to know his mind. Being satisfied about his good intention he entertains Bharata and his men with fruits and roots etc. brought by him and, on his having taken rest awhile and overcome his fatigue, allows him to advance.

ततो निविष्टां ध्वजिनीं गङ्गामन्वाश्रितां नदीम् । निषादराजो दृष्ट्वैव ज्ञातीन् स परितोऽब्रवीत् ॥ १ ॥

महतीयमितः सेना सागराभा प्रदृश्यते । नास्यान्तमवगच्छामि मनसापि विचिन्तयन् ॥ २ ॥
यदा तु खलु दुर्बुद्धिर्भरतः स्वयमागतः । स एष हि महाकायः कोविदारध्वजो रथे ॥ ३ ॥
बन्धयिष्यति वा पाशैरथ वास्मान् वधिष्यति । अनु दाशरथिं रामं पित्रा राज्याद् विवासितम् ॥ ४ ॥
सम्पन्नां श्रियमन्विच्छंस्तस्य राज्ञः सुदुर्लभाम् । भरतः कैकयीपुत्रो हन्तुं समधिगच्छति ॥ ५ ॥
भर्ता चैव सखा चैव रामो दाशरथिर्मम । तस्यार्थकामाः संनद्धा गङ्गानूपेऽत्र तिष्ठत ॥ ६ ॥
तिष्ठन्तु सर्वदाशाश्च गङ्गामन्वाश्रिता नदीम् । बलयुक्ता नदीरक्षा मांसमूलफलाशनाः ॥ ७ ॥
नावां शतानां पञ्चानां कैवर्तानां शतं शतम् । संनद्धानां तथा यूनां तिष्ठन्त्वित्यभ्यचोदयत् ॥ ८ ॥
यदि तुष्टस्तु भरतो रामस्येह भविष्यति । इयं स्वस्तिमती सेना गङ्गामद्य तरिष्यति ॥ ९ ॥
इत्युक्त्वोपायनं गृह्य मत्स्यमांसमधूनि च । अभिचक्राम भरतं निषादाधिपतिर्गुहः ॥ १० ॥

The moment Guha (the chief of the Niṣādas) saw the army (of Bharata) encamped along (the bank of) the river Ganga, he now spoke (as follows) to his kinsmen sitting around him:—(1) "(Even) from this place this huge army appears like a sea. Though pondering deeply, I do not perceive its end even with the mind. (2) If Bharata,— who has surely come in person because here is seen that towering banner bearing the device of a Kovidāra tree on the chariot,—has evil intent, he will either cause us to be bound with chains or kill us, who are devoted to Śrī Rāma, (the eldest) son of Daśaratha, exiled from his kingdom by his father. (3-4) Seeking to possess the entire fortune of that monarch (Śrī Rāma), which is (otherwise) most difficult to get, Bharata, the son of Kaikeyī, has taken it into his head to kill him. (5) Śrī Rāma, son of Daśaratha, is my lord and friend too. (Therefore) seeking to advance his interests remain stationed on this bank of the Ganga, clothed with mail. (6) Let all (my) ferrymen, accompanied by troops, remain rooted to the bank of the river Ganga, guarding (access to) the river and living on meat, roots and fruits (stored in the boats). (7) And let one hundred youthful fishermen clothed with mail occupy each of the five hundred boats," so did Guha issue his commands. (8) "If, however, Bharata proves to be favourably disposed towards Śrī Rāma at this moment, this army will (be) safely (allowed to) cross the Ganga today." (9) Saying so and taking sugar-candy, the pulp of fruits and honey as an offering, Guha, the chief of the Niṣādas, proceeded to meet Bharata. (10)

तमायान्तं तु सम्प्रेक्ष्य सूतपुत्रः प्रतापवान् । भरतायाचचक्षेऽथ समयज्ञो विनीतवत् ॥ ११ ॥
एष ज्ञातिसहस्रेण स्थपतिः परिवारितः । कुशलो दण्डकारण्ये वृद्धो भ्रातुश्च ते सखा ॥ १२ ॥
तस्मात् पश्यतु काकुत्स्थ त्वां निषादाधिपो गुहः । असंशयं विजानीते यत्र तौ रामलक्ष्मणौ ॥ १३ ॥
एतत् तु वचनं श्रुत्वा सुमन्त्राद् भरतः शुभम् । उवाच वचनं शीघ्रं गुहः पश्यतु मामिति ॥ १४ ॥
लब्ध्वानुज्ञां सम्प्रहृष्टो ज्ञातिभिः परिवारितः । आगम्य भरतं प्रह्वो गुहो वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ १५ ॥
निष्कुटश्चैव देशोऽयं वञ्चिताश्चापि ते वयम् । निवेदयाम ते सर्वं स्वके दाशगृहे वस ॥ १६ ॥
अस्ति मूलफलं चैतन्निषादैः स्वयमर्जितम् । आर्द्रं शुष्कं तथा मांसं वन्यं चोच्चावचं तथा ॥ १७ ॥
आशंसे स्वाशिता सेना वत्स्यत्येनां विभावरीम् । अर्चितो विविधैः कामैः श्वः ससैन्यो गमिष्यसि ॥ १८ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे चतुरशीतितमः सर्गः ॥ ८४ ॥

Vividly perceiving him coming, the glorious Sumantra (the son of a charioteer) for his part, who knew what is called for at a particular time, forthwith spoke to Bharata (as follows) like an humble servant:—(11) "Attended by a thousand of his kinsmen, here comes Guha, the sovereign

lord of the Niṣādas, who is a senior friend of your (elder) brother (Śrī Rāma), and is closely acquainted with the Daṇḍaka forest. Therefore, allow him to see you, O scion of Kakutstha! Doubtless he knows well where the celebrated Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa may be." (12-13) Hearing this pleasing report from (the lips of) Sumantra, Bharata for his part made the following reply: "Let Guha see me at once." (14) Immensely rejoiced to receive permission (to see the prince) and approaching Bharata, Guha, who was surrounded by his kinsmen, meekly submitted as follows:—(15) "This territory is but a pleasure-grove attached to your palace and we have been taken in (by our unwariness in failing to know of your visit beforehand and thus being deprived of an opportunity to receive you in advance). We (hereby) offer you all (that we have); (pray) dwell in the house of a ferryman, which is your own. (16) Here are roots and fruits, both green and dried, procured by the Niṣādas (a tribe of fishermen, Guha's own clansmen) themselves as well as the pulp of fruits and wild cereals of various kinds. (17) I hope the army, being well fed (by us), will stay (here) tonight. Entertained with various objects of enjoyment, you (too, I hope) will leave with your army (only) tomorrow." (18)

Thus ends Canto Eighty-four in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

पञ्चाशीतितमः सर्गः

Canto LXXXV

Highly praising Guha, Bharata, while departing, inquires of him the way to the hermitage of Bharadwāja. Promising to follow the prince as a guide with his servants and placing his misgivings before him, Guha seeks to know his intentions about Śrī Rāma and consoles the prince, who was constantly bewailing, till dusk.

एवमुक्तस्तु भरतो निषादाधिपतिं गुहम् । प्रत्युवाच महाप्राज्ञो वाक्यं हेत्वर्थसंहितम् ॥ १ ॥
ऊर्जितः खलु ते कामः कृतो मम गुरोः सखे । यो मे त्वमीदृशीं सेनामभ्यर्चयितुमिच्छसि ॥ २ ॥
इत्युक्त्वा स महातेजा गुहं वचनमुत्तमम् । अब्रवीद् भरतः श्रीमान् पन्थानं दर्शयन् पुनः ॥ ३ ॥
कतरेण गमिष्यामि भरद्वाजाश्रमं यथा । गहनोऽयं भृशं देशो गङ्गानूपो दुरत्ययः ॥ ४ ॥
तस्य तद् वचनं श्रुत्वा राजपुत्रस्य धीमतः । अब्रवीत् प्राञ्जलिर्भूत्वा गुहो गहनगोचरः ॥ ५ ॥
दाशास्त्वनुगमिष्यन्ति देशज्ञाः सुसमाहिताः । अहं चानुगमिष्यामि राजपुत्र महाबल ॥ ६ ॥
कच्चिन्न दुष्टो व्रजसि रामस्याक्लिष्टकर्मणः । इयं ते महती सेना शङ्कां जनयतीव मे ॥ ७ ॥

Spoken to as above, Bharata, for his part, who was exceedingly wise, gave to Guha, the ruler of the Niṣādas, the following reply, which was consonant with reason and purposeful:—(1) "Indeed your great object (of according a right royal reception to me) has been accomplished in that you seek to entertain my army of such magnitude, O friend of my elder brother!" (2) Having spoken as above, the said illustrious Bharata, who was possessed of great splendour, once more addressed the following excellently-worded question to Guha, pointing to the way (ahead):—(3)

"By which of the two routes (appearing before me) shall I proceed to the hermitage of Bharadwāja ? This tract of land drained by the Ganga is most thickly set with trees etc. and (as such) difficult to cross." (4) Hearing the aforesaid question of that intelligent prince (Bharata), Guha, who used to roam about in the woods, replied with joined palms (as follows):—(5) "Ferrymen who are familiar with the region and very attentive will undoubtedly accompany you. I too shall follow you (in person), O exceptionally mighty prince ! (6) I hope you are not going with evil intent towards Śrī Rāma, who does great deeds without any exertion ? This huge army of yours gives rise to apprehension in my mind as it were." (7)

तमेवमभिभाषन्तमाकाश इव निर्मलः । भरतः श्लक्ष्णया वाचा गुहं वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ ८ ॥
मा भूत् स कालो यत् कष्टं न मां शङ्कितुमर्हसि । राघवः स हि मे भ्राता ज्येष्ठः पितृसमो मतः ॥ ९ ॥
तं निवर्तयितुं यामि काकुत्स्थं वनवासिनम् । बुद्धिरन्या न मे कार्या गुह सत्यं ब्रवीमि ते ॥ १० ॥
स तु संहृष्टवदनः श्रुत्वा भरतभाषितम् । पुनरेवाब्रवीद् वाक्यं भरतं प्रति हर्षितः ॥ ११ ॥
धन्यस्त्वं न त्वया तुल्यं पश्यामि जगतीतले । अयत्नादागतं राज्यं यस्त्वं त्यक्तुमिहेच्छसि ॥ १२ ॥
शाश्वती खलु ते कीर्तिर्लोकाननु चरिष्यति । यस्त्वं कृच्छ्रगतं रामं प्रत्यानयितुमिच्छसि ॥ १३ ॥
एवं सम्भाषमाणस्य गुहस्य भरतं तदा । बभौ नष्टप्रभः सूर्यो रजनी चाभ्यवर्तत ॥ १४ ॥
संनिवेश्य स तां सेनां गुहेन परितोषितः । शत्रुघ्नेन समं श्रीमाञ्छयनं पुनरागमत् ॥ १५ ॥

To the aforesaid Guha, who was talking as above, Bharata, whose heart was (absolutely) taintless as the sky, replied in sweet words as follows:—(8) "May that time never come when such wickedness appears (in me). You ought not to entertain any misgiving about me; for that scion of Raghu is my elder brother and is esteemed by me as equal to my father. (9) I go to bring back Śrī Rāma (a scion of Kakutstha), who is dwelling in the woods. I tell you the (bare) truth, O Guha ! No other motive should be imputed to me." (10) With his face rendered extremely bright with joy on hearing Bharata's reply, Guha for his part joyfully spoke once more to Bharata as follows:—(11) "Blessed are you. I find none on the surface of this globe equal to you, who seek to relinquish a kingdom come (to you) without any effort (on your part) ! (12) Surely your lasting fame will extend to the spheres inasmuch as you wish to bring back (to Ayodhya) Śrī Rāma, who has fallen in adversity." (13) While Guha was conversing thus with Bharata, the sun lost its splendour and night fell. (14) Lodging the said army in camps, and soothed by Guha, the glorious Bharata then went to bed with Śatrughna. (15)

रामचिन्तामयः शोको भरतस्य महात्मनः । उपस्थितो ह्यनर्हस्य धर्मप्रेक्षस्य तादृशः ॥ १६ ॥
अन्तर्दाहेन दहनः संतापयति राघवम् । वनदाहाग्निसंतप्तं गूढोऽग्निरिव पादपम् ॥ १७ ॥
प्रसृतः सर्वगात्रेभ्यः स्वेदं शोकाग्निसम्भवम् । यथा सूर्यांशुसंतप्तो हिमवान् प्रसृतो हिमम् ॥ १८ ॥
ध्याननिर्दरशैलेन विनिःश्वसितधातुना । दैन्यपादपसंघेन शोकायासाधिशृङ्गिणा ॥ १९ ॥
प्रमोहानन्तसत्त्वेन संतापौषधिवेणुना । आक्रान्तो दुःखशैलेन महता कैकयीसुतः ॥ २० ॥
विनिःश्वसन् वै भृशदुर्मनास्ततः प्रमूढसंज्ञः परमापदं गतः ।
शमं न लेभे हृदयज्वरार्दितो नरर्षभो यूथहतो यथर्षभः ॥ २१ ॥
गुहेन सार्धं भरतः समागतो महानुभावः सजनः समाहितः ।
सुदुर्मनास्तं भरतं तदा पुनर्गुहः समाश्वासयदग्रजं प्रति ॥ २२ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे पञ्चाशीतितमः सर्गः ॥ ८५ ॥

Grief born of anxiety for Śrī Rāma and unique of its kind (now) overtook the high-souled Bharata, whose eyes were fixed on righteousness and who surely did not deserve this mental torture. (16) (Even) as a fire hidden in the hollow of a tree burns a tree (already) scorched by a forest-consuming fire, so did the fire of anxiety for Śrī Rāma inwardly begin to consume Bharata (a scion of Raghu), who was already scorched by the fire of grief caused by his father's death. (17) Bharata began to exude sweat, born of the fire of grief, from all his limbs in the same way as the Himalaya mountain heated by the sun's rays allows its snow to melt and flow. (18) Bharata (the son of Kaikeyī) was weighed down by a huge mountain of agony, consisting of a compact mass of rocks in the shape of (loving) contemplation on Śrī Rāma, which contained minerals in the shape of sighs, was clothed with a cluster of trees in the shape of recoiling of the senses from their objects and was crowned with a tall peak in the shape of languor caused by grief, infested by numberless beasts in the shape of swoons and covered by herbs and bamboos in the shape of burning of the internal and external organs of sense. (19-20) Like a bull strayed from its herd, Bharata (a jewel among men),—who, having really fallen in extreme adversity, felt miserably disconsolate, his mind being utterly confused in consequence, and was heaving sighs, afflicted as he was with anguish of heart,—found no peace (in his bed). (21) When the noble-minded Bharata, who, though composed, felt very disconsolate, got united along with his men with Guha (again), the latter reassured him once more with reference to his elder brother. (22)

Thus ends Canto Eighty-five in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

षडशीतितमः सर्गः

Canto LXXXVI

Guha reports to Bharata how Śrī Rāma and his party broke their journey at Śṛṅgaverapura and reproduces before him the dialogue that took place between Lakṣmaṇa and himself at night and further tells him how the two brothers entangled their locks in to a thick mass, crossed the holy river with Sītā and left for the hermitage of Sage Bharadwāja.

आचचक्षेऽथ सद्भावं लक्ष्मणस्य महात्मनः । भरतायाप्रमेयाय गुहो गहनगोचरः ॥ १ ॥
तं जाग्रतं गुणैर्युक्तं वरचापेषुधारिणम् । भ्रातृगुप्त्यर्थमत्यन्तमहं लक्ष्मणमब्रुवम् ॥ २ ॥
इयं तात सुखा शय्या त्वदर्थमुपकल्पिता । प्रत्याश्वसिहि शेष्वास्यां सुखं राघवनन्दन ॥ ३ ॥
उचितोऽयं जनः सर्वो दुःखानां त्वं सुखोचितः । धर्मात्मंस्तस्य गुप्त्यर्थं जागरिष्यामहे वयम् ॥ ४ ॥
नहि रामात् प्रियतरो ममास्ति भुवि कश्चन । मोत्सुको भूर्ब्रवीम्येतदथ सत्यं तवाग्रतः ॥ ५ ॥
अस्य प्रसादादाशंसे लोकेऽस्मिन् सुमहद् यशः । धर्मावाप्तिं च विपुलामर्थकामौ च केवलौ ॥ ६ ॥
सोऽहं प्रियसखं रामं शयानं सह सीतया । रक्षिष्यामि धनुष्पाणिः सर्वैः स्वैर्ज्ञातिभिः सह ॥ ७ ॥
नहि मेऽविदितं किंचिद् वनेऽस्मिंश्चरतः सदा । चतुरङ्गं ह्यपि बलं प्रसहेम वयं युधि ॥ ८ ॥

Guha, who used to roam about in the woods, now reported to Bharata, who was immeasurably great, the praiseworthy attitude of the high-souled Lakṣmaṇa (towards his eldest brother):—(1) "I spoke (as follows) to Lakṣmaṇa, who is endowed with excellences (of various kinds such as devotion and obedience to his eldest brother), and was keeping vigil for the safety of his (eldest) brother (and his beloved consort), wielding an excellent bow and arrows:—(2) 'Here is a cosy bed prepared for you, O dear brother ! Be reassured (about the safety of Śrī Rāma and Sītā) and repose on it with ease, O delight of Raghu's race ! (3) All of us (your servants) are used to hardships, while you are deserving of ease. (As for Śrī Rāma) we shall keep awake for his safety, O pious-minded prince ! (4) Surely none on earth is dearer to me than Śrī Rāma. No longer be anxious (about the safety of your eldest brother and sister-in-law): I tell you this truth in your presence. (5) Through his grace I hope to acquire very great renown in this world and to earn religious merit in abundance as well as wealth and enjoyment free from blemish. (6) As such I shall guard, bow in hand, with all my kinsmen, my beloved friend, Śrī Rāma, reposing with Sītā. (7) Surely there is nothing unknown in this forest to me, who constantly roam about in it. In fact we can withstand (here) even an army consisting of (all) the four limbs on the field of battle.' (8)

एवमस्माभिरुक्तेन लक्ष्मणेन महात्मना । अनुनीता वयं सर्वे धर्ममेवानुपश्यता ॥ ९ ॥
कथं दाशरथौ भूमौ शयाने सह सीतया । शक्या निद्रा मया लब्धुं जीवितं वा सुखानि वा ॥ १० ॥
यो न देवासुरैः सर्वैः शक्यः प्रसहितुं युधि । तं पश्य गुह संविष्टं तृणेषु सह सीतया ॥ ११ ॥
महता तपसा लब्धो विविधैश्च परिश्रमैः । एको दशरथस्यैष पुत्रः सदृशलक्षणः ॥ १२ ॥
अस्मिन् प्रव्राजिते राजा न चिरं वर्तयिष्यति । विधवा मेदिनी नूनं क्षिप्रमेव भविष्यति ॥ १३ ॥
विनद्य सुमहानादं श्रमेणोपरताः स्त्रियः । निर्घोषो विरतो नूनमद्य राजनिवेशने ॥ १४ ॥
कौसल्या चैव राजा च तथैव जननी मम । नाशंसे यदि ते सर्वे जीवेयुः शर्वरीमिमाम् ॥ १५ ॥

"Spoken to by us as aforesaid, the high-souled Lakṣmaṇa, who kept righteousness alone in view, politely replied to us all (in the following words):—(9) 'How can sleep be had, or (even) life or comforts be enjoyed by me when Śrī Rāma (son of Daśaratha) is reposing on the ground with Sītā ? (10) Behold, O Guha, stretched on blades of grass with Sītā, him who cannot be withstood on the field of battle by all the gods and demons (gathered together) ! (11) This peerless son of Daśaratha, possessing characteristics like unto his own, was secured by virtue of great austerities and through exertions (in the shape of sacrificial undertakings) of various kinds. (12) He having been exiled, the king will not survive long and Mother Earth will surely be widowed soon enough. (13) (Nay,) having uttered a very loud cry (consequent on the emperor's death, which must already have occurred), the women must have ceased crying because of exertion; and the great noise in the palace must have surely died out by this time. (14) I do not expect that mother Kausalyā and the king and even so my (own) mother (Sumitrā)—all these will survive till this night. (15)

जीवेदपि च मे माता शत्रुघ्नस्यान्ववेक्षया । दुःखिता या हि कौसल्या वीरसूर्विनशिष्यति ॥ १६ ॥
अतिक्रान्तमतिक्रान्तमनवाप्य मनोरथम् । राज्ये राममनिक्षिप्य पिता मे विनशिष्यति ॥ १७ ॥

सिद्धार्थाः पितरं वृत्तं तस्मिन् काले ह्युपस्थिते । प्रेतकार्येषु सर्वेषु संस्करिष्यन्ति भूमिपम् ॥ १८ ॥
रम्यचत्वरसंस्थानां सुविभक्तमहापथाम् । हर्म्यप्रासादसम्पन्नां सर्वरत्नविभूषिताम् ॥ १९ ॥
गजाश्वरथसम्बाधां तूर्यनादविनादिताम् । सर्वकल्याणसम्पूर्णां हृष्टपुष्टजनाकुलाम् ॥ २० ॥
आरामोद्यानसम्पूर्णां समाजोत्सवशालिनीम् । सुखिता विचरिष्यन्ति राजधानीं पितुर्मम ॥ २१ ॥
अपि सत्यप्रतिज्ञेन सार्धं कुशलिना वयम् । निवृत्ते समये ह्यस्मिन् सुखिताः प्रविशेमहि ॥ २२ ॥

'Even if my mother survives in expectation of (the return of) Śatrughna, the afflicted Kausalyā, who has given birth to a hero (like Śrī Rāma) will surely die. (16) Failing to install Śrī Rāma on the throne (of Ayodhya) and (thus) without realizing his (long cherished) ambition, my father will expire exclaiming "Everything is past and gone !' (17) Accomplished of purpose indeed are they who will, when the time comes for it, consecrate my father, the deceased emperor, in the course of all the funeral rites. (18) And happy are they who will (in the event of my father's survival) move about in the capital of my father, the cross-roads of which are located in beautiful spots, whose main roads are clearly defined, which is richly endowed with mansions as well as with temples and palaces and adorned with all sorts of precious things, which is crowded with elephants, horses and chariots and made resonant by the sound of clarionets, which is full of all blessings and peopled by joyous and well-fed men and women, and which is rich in gardens and pleasances and looks charming with a series of festivals. (19—21) When this term (of exile) is actually over, shall we (Sītā and myself) happily return to Ayodhya along with Śrī Rāma, who has safely redeemed his promise ?' (22)

परिदेवयमानस्य तस्यैवं हि महात्मनः । तिष्ठतो राजपुत्रस्य शर्वरी सात्यवर्तत ॥ २३ ॥
प्रभाते विमले सूर्ये कारयित्वा जटा उभौ । अस्मिन् भागीरथीतीरे सुखं संतारितौ मया ॥ २४ ॥
जटाधरौ तौ द्रुमचीरवाससौ महाबलौ कुञ्जरयूथपोपमौ ।
वरेषुचापासिधरौ परंतपौ व्यपेक्षमाणौ सह सीतया गतौ ॥ २५ ॥

इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे षडशीतितमः सर्गः ॥ ८६ ॥

"Even while that high-souled prince (Lakṣmaṇa), who remained sitting (all the while), was lamenting as aforesaid, that night actually slipped away. (23) Next morning, when a cloudless sun appeared (in the sky), both the brothers (along with Sītā) were safely ferried by me across the stream after helping them in entangling their locks into a mass of hair (as ascetics do) on this (very) bank of the Gaṅgā. (24) Wearing matted locks and attired in the bark of trees, (nay) wielding an excellent quiver, bow and sword, (each) and looking all round (to scan the beauty of the landscape), the two princes, who were possessed of extraordinary strength and looked like a pair of lordly elephants, and were capable of tormenting their enemy, departed with Sītā. (25)

Thus ends Canto Eighty-six in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

सप्ताशीतितमः सर्गः

Canto LXXXVII

Overwhelmed with grief to hear from the mouth of Guha how his two brothers got their hair entangled into a mass, Bharata falls unconscious on the ground. On regaining consciousness he despatches Guha to reassure mother Kausalyā, who is filled with apprehension about the safety of Śrī Rāma and his party on hearing of Bharata's swoon, and apprise her of its real cause and also of Śrī Rāma's welfare. While doing so Guha also tells her how Śrī Rāma and Sītā lay down on a bed of Kuśa grass prepared by Lakṣmaṇa with his own hands when the party broke journey at Śṛṅgaverapura and how Guha with Lakṣmaṇa kept watch the whole night for the protection of Śrī Rāma and Sītā.

गुहस्य वचनं श्रुत्वा भरतो भृशमप्रियम् । ध्यानं जगाम तत्रैव यत्र तच्छ्रुतमप्रियम् ॥ १ ॥
सुकुमारो महासत्त्वः सिंहस्कन्धो महाभुजः । पुण्डरीकविशालाक्षस्तरुणः प्रियदर्शनः ॥ २ ॥
प्रत्याश्वस्य मुहूर्तं तु कालं परमदुर्मनाः । ससाद सहसा तोत्रैर्हृदि विद्ध इव द्विपः ॥ ३ ॥
भरतं मूर्च्छितं दृष्ट्वा विवर्णवदनो गुहः । बभूव व्यथितस्तत्र भूमिकम्पे यथा द्रुमः ॥ ४ ॥
तदवस्थं तु भरतं शत्रुघ्नोऽनन्तरस्थितः । परिष्वज्य रुरोदोच्चैर्विसंज्ञः शोककर्शितः ॥ ५ ॥
ततः सर्वाः समापेतुर्मातरो भरतस्य ताः । उपवासकृशा दीना भर्तृव्यसनकर्शिताः ॥ ६ ॥

Hearing the report of Guha (about Śrī Rāma's matted locks of hair), which was most disagreeable (to hear), Bharata began to think deeply of Śrī Rāma alone, of whom that unpleasant news was heard by him (as it made him apprehensive that Śrī Rāma might not return to Ayodhya now that he had entangled his hair into a mass). (1) Having remained composed awhile, the mighty-armed prince (Bharata), for his part—who, though tender (of body), was possessed of extraordinary strength, whose shoulders resembled a lion's and who had eyes big as a lotus, and who was (both) young and pleasing of appearance,—suddenly sank to the ground extremely sad at heart, like an elephant pierced with goads in the heart. (2-3) Seeing Bharata unconscious, Guha felt shaken at that time like a tree during an earthquake, and his face grew pale. (4) Embracing Bharata, lying in that (unconscious) state, Śatrughna, for his part, who stood near by, got non-plussed, stricken as he was with grief, and loudly cried. (5) Then rushed together all the mothers of Bharata. They were emaciated through fasting, looked miserable and felt afflicted due to separation from their husband. (6)

ताश्च तं पतितं भूमौ रुदत्यः पर्यवारयन् । कौसल्या त्वनुसृत्यैनं दुर्मनाः परिषस्वजे ॥ ७ ॥
वत्सला स्वं यथा वत्समुपगुह्य तपस्विनी । परिपप्रच्छ भरतं रुदती शोकलालसा ॥ ८ ॥
पुत्र व्याधिर्न ते कच्चिच्छरीरं प्रति बाधते । अस्य राजकुलस्याद्य त्वदधीनं हि जीवितम् ॥ ९ ॥
त्वां दृष्ट्वा पुत्र जीवामि रामे सभ्रातृके गते । वृत्ते दशरथे राज्ञि नाथ एकस्त्वमद्य नः ॥ १० ॥
कच्चिन्न लक्ष्मणे पुत्र श्रुतं ते किंचिदप्रियम् । पुत्रे वा ह्येकपुत्रायाः सहभार्ये वनं गते ॥ ११ ॥
स मुहूर्तं समाश्वस्य रुदन्नेव महायशाः । कौसल्यां परिसान्त्व्येदं गुहं वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ १२ ॥

Nay, shedding tears they surrounded Bharata fallen on the ground. Approaching him sad at heart, Kausalyā for her part hugged him. (7) Pressing him to her bosom as a cow does its own calf, that exceedingly thoughtful lady, who was totally given up to grief, questioned Bharata (in the following words), shedding tears (all the time):—(8) "I hope no ailment (of any kind) afflicts your body. In fact, the life of this (entire) royal household hinges on you. (9) Looking on you alone, my son, do I survive. Rāma with his brother (Lakṣmaṇa) having left (for the forest) and King Daśaratha (your father) having expired, you alone are our protector today. (10) I hope nothing unwelcome has been heard by you regarding Lakṣmaṇa or my own son (Rāma),—I having only one son,—who has proceeded to the forest with his consort." (11) Returning to his normal self after an hour or so, and consoling Kausalyā (with the assurance that nothing unwelcome had been heard with reference to Lakṣmaṇa or Śrī Rāma), Bharata (the highly illustrious prince) spoke weeping all the same to Guha as follows.—(12)

भ्राता मे क्वावसद् रात्रौ क्व सीता क्व च लक्ष्मणः । अस्वपच्छयने कस्मिन् किं भुक्त्वा गुह शंस मे ॥ १३ ॥
सोऽब्रवीद् भरतं हृष्टो निषादाधिपतिर्गुहः । यद्विधं प्रतिपेदे च रामे प्रियहितेऽतिथौ ॥ १४ ॥
अन्नमुच्चावचं भक्ष्याः फलानि विविधानि च । रामायाभ्यवहारार्थं बहुशोऽपहृतं मया ॥ १५ ॥
तत् सर्वं प्रत्यनुज्ञासीद् रामः सत्यपराक्रमः । न हि तत् प्रत्यगृह्णात् स क्षत्रधर्ममनुस्मरन् ॥ १६ ॥
नह्यस्माभिः प्रतिग्राह्यं सखे देयं तु सर्वदा । इति तेन वयं सर्वे अनुनीता महात्मना ॥ १७ ॥
लक्ष्मणेन यदानीतं पीतं वारि महात्मना । औपवास्यं तदाकार्षीद् राघवः सह सीतया ॥ १८ ॥

"Where did my (elder) brother (Śrī Rāma) stay during the night? Where did Sītā spend the night and where Lakṣmaṇa? On what (kind of) bed and eating what did he repose? Tell me this, O Guha!" (13) Questioned thus, Guha, the ruler of the Niṣādas, thereupon joyfully told Bharata (in the following words) what kind of arrangement he had made for (feeding and reposing) his beloved and kind guest:—(14) "Boiled rice of various kinds, (other) foods requiring mastication and fruits of every description were brought by me in abundance to the presence of Śrī Rāma for his repast. (15) Śrī Rāma of unfailing prowess accepted all that (for my pleasure) and returned it to me. Bearing in mind the duty of a Kṣatriya (who is not permitted by the Śāstras to accept a gift, much less on the bank of a holy river), however, he did not partake of it. (16) 'No gift in any case is to be accepted by us (Kṣatriyas), my friend: a gift can only be made by us.' In these words were we all pacified by that high-souled prince. (17) (That) water (alone) which was brought by Lakṣmaṇa was drunk by the high-souled prince. Along with Sītā Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) then observed a fast (for the day). (18)

ततस्तु जलशेषेण लक्ष्मणोऽप्यकरोत् तदा । वाग्यतास्ते त्रयः संध्यां समुपासन्त संहिताः ॥ १९ ॥
सौमित्रिस्तु ततः पश्चादकरोत् स्वास्तरं शुभम् । स्वयमानीय बर्हींषि क्षिप्रं राघवकारणात् ॥ २० ॥
तस्मिन् समाविशद् रामः स्वास्तरे सह सीतया । प्रक्षाल्य च तयोः पादौ व्यपाक्रामत् स लक्ष्मणः ॥ २१ ॥
एतत् तदिङ्गुदीमूलमिदमेव च तत् तृणम् । यस्मिन् रामश्च सीता च रात्रिं तां शयितावुभौ ॥ २२ ॥
नियम्य पृष्ठे तु तलाङ्गुलित्रवान्शरैः सुपूर्णाविषुधी परंतपः ।
महद्धनुः सज्जमुपोह्य लक्ष्मणो निशामतिष्ठत् परितोऽस्य केवलम् ॥ २३ ॥
ततस्त्वहं चोत्तमबाणचापभृत् स्थितोऽभवं तत्र स यत्र लक्ष्मणः ।
अतन्द्रितैर्ज्ञातिभिरात्तकार्मुकैर्महेन्द्रकल्पं परिपालयंस्तदा ॥ २४ ॥
इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डे सप्ताशीतितमः सर्गः ॥ ८७ ॥

"Then Lakṣmaṇa too forthwith slaked his thirst by means of the water that was left over. (All) the three (*viz.*, Śrī Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sumantra)

duly worshipped (the deity presiding over) the evening twilight silently together. (19) After that, fetching blades of Kuśa grass himself, Lakṣmaṇa for his part promptly prepared a sacred bed for Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu). (20) Śrī Rāma sat down on the bed with Sītā and, washing the feet of Śrī Rāma and Sītā (Śrī Rāma's with his own hands and Sītā's by giving water to her), the celebrated Lakṣmaṇa moved to a distance. (21) This is the foot of the same Ingudī tree and these are the same blades of Kuśa grass where and on which Śrī Rāma and Sītā both reposed that night. (22) Fastening at his back (one on each side) a pair of quivers fully packed with arrows and donning gloves about his hands and wielding a large stringed bow, Lakṣmaṇa, a tormentor of his foes, for his part remained walking round Śrī Rāma during the night singly. (23) Wielding excellent arrows and bow, I too remained posted where the aforesaid Lakṣmaṇa kept moving carefully guarding Śrī Rāma (who vied with Indra) with my vigilant kinsmen carrying bows (in their hands)." (24)

Thus ends Canto Eighty-seven in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

अष्टाशीतितमः सर्गः

Canto LXXXVIII

Showing to Kausalyā and others the bed of Kuśa grass on which Śrī Rāma and Sītā spent their night, and contrasting it with the royal splendour and luxury in which he lived in Ayodhya, Bharata laments for him and, holding himself responsible for this turn of events and complimenting Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā for throwing their lot with Śrī Rāma and sharing his privations, makes up his mind henceforth to dwell in the forest as a representative of Śrī Rāma, wearing matted locks on his head like him.

तच्छ्रुत्वा निपुणं सर्वं भरतः सह मन्त्रिभिः । इङ्गुदीमूलमागम्य रामशय्यामवेक्षत ॥ १ ॥
अब्रवीज्जननीः सर्वा इह तस्य महात्मनः । शर्वरी शयिता भूमाविदमस्य विमर्दितम् ॥ २ ॥
महाराजकुलीनेन महाभागेन धीमता । जातो दशरथेनोर्व्यां न रामः स्वप्तुमर्हति ॥ ३ ॥
अजिनोत्तरसंस्तीर्णे वरास्तरणसंचये । शयित्वा पुरुषव्याघ्रः कथं शेते महीतले ॥ ४ ॥
प्रासादाग्रविमानेषु वलभीषु च सर्वदा । हैमराजतभौमेषु वरास्तरणशालिषु ॥ ५ ॥
पुष्पसंचयचित्रेषु चन्दनागुरुगन्धिषु । पाण्डुराभ्रप्रकाशेषु शुकसंघरुतेषु च ॥ ६ ॥
प्रासादवरवर्येषु शीतवत्सु सुगन्धिषु । उषित्वा मेरुकल्पेषु कृतकाञ्चनभित्तिषु ॥ ७ ॥
गीतवादित्रनिर्घोषैर्वराभरणनिःस्वनैः । मृदङ्गवरशब्दैश्च सततं प्रतिबोधितः ॥ ८ ॥
वन्दिभिर्वन्दितः काले बहुभिः सूतमागधैः । गाथाभिरनुरूपाभिः स्तुतिभिश्च परंतपः ॥ ९ ॥

Hearing all that attentively and reaching the foot of the Ingudī tree with the (king's) counsellors, Bharata saw Śrī Rāma's bed. (1) He said to all his mothers, "Here was the night spent by that high-souled prince lying on the ground. These are the blades of Kuśa grass crushed by his body (while reposing on them). (2) Śrī Rāma, who was procreated by the wise and highly

blessed Daśaratha born in the line of great kings, does not deserve to sleep on the ground (without any shade or couch). (3) Having reposed (all along) on a bed consisting of a pile of excellent rugs and covered with an outermost covering of (superb) deerskin (fit for kings), how does Śrī Rāma (a tiger among men) sleep on the ground ? (4) Sleeping always on the topmost storey of palaces built after the style of aerial cars and in turrets and in the foremost apartments of excellent seven-storeyed buildings—which were provided with floors paved with gold and silver and furnished with excellent carpets, which looked picturesque with heaps of flowers and were fragrant with the odour of sandalwood and aloe, which shone like white clouds and were noisy with the chatter of flocks of parrots, where (natural) coolness prevailed and which emitted a sweet fragrance (of camphor etc.), nay, which vied with Mount Meru (in height) and whose walls were inlaid with gold,—he was awakened every day by the strains of vocal and instrumental music, the tinkling of excellent jewels and the excellent sound of clay tomtoms. (5—8) (Again) Śrī Rāma (the tormentor of his enemy) was glorified at the time of waking by a number of panegyrists, bards and minstrels through appropriate verses and songs of praise. (9)

अश्रद्धेयमिदं लोके न सत्यं प्रतिभाति मा । मुह्यते खलु मे भावः स्वप्नोऽयमिति मे मतिः ॥ १० ॥
न नूनं दैवतं किंचित् कालेन बलवत्तरम् । यत्र दाशरथी रामो भूमावेवमशेत सः ॥ ११ ॥
यस्मिन् विदेहराजस्य सुता च प्रियदर्शना । दयिता शयिता भूमौ स्नुषा दशरथस्य च ॥ १२ ॥
इयं शय्या मम भ्रातुरिदमावर्तितं शुभम् । स्थण्डिले कठिने सर्वं गात्रैर्विमृदितं तृणम् ॥ १३ ॥
मन्ये साभरणा सुप्ता सीतास्मिञ्शयने शुभा । तत्र तत्र हि दृश्यन्ते सक्ताः कनकबिन्दवः ॥ १४ ॥
उत्तरीयमिहासक्तं सुव्यक्तं सीतया तदा । तथा ह्येते प्रकाशन्ते सक्ताः कौशेयतन्तवः ॥ १५ ॥
मन्ये भर्तुः सुखा शय्या येन बाला तपस्विनी । सुकुमारी सती दुःखं न विजानाति मैथिली ॥ १६ ॥

"This is incredible in the world and does not appear true to me. My mind is really confused. My conclusion therefore is that this is a dream. (10) Surely there is no deity more powerful than Time (the will of God), impelled by which the aforesaid Śrī Rāma, son of Daśaratha, reposes on the ground in this way and by force of which the daughter of Janaka (the king of the Videha territory), who is (so) pleasing to the sight and the beloved daughter-in-law of Daśaratha, has to lie down on the ground. (11-12) This is the bed of my (elder) brother and here are the blessed marks of his changing sides in the form of all the blades of (Kuśa) grass crushed by his limbs against the hard ground. (13) I suppose the blessed Sītā lay down decked with ornaments on this bed; for here and there are seen stuck (to the grass) particles of gold. (14) Sītā quite evidently had her upper garment entangled with these blades at that time. That is why these silk threads appear stuck to them. (15) I conclude the husband's bed (be it soft or hard) is comfortable (at all events to a devoted wife), as (is evident from the fact that) Sītā (the princess of Mithilā), though youthful and tender, experiences no smart (even while reposing on such a hard and rough bed), virtuous as she is and devoted to austerities. (16)

हा हतोऽस्मि नृशंसोऽस्मि यत् सभार्यः कृते मम । ईदृशीं राघवः शय्यामधिशेते ह्यनाथवत् ॥ १७ ॥
सार्वभौमकुले जातः सर्वलोकसुखावहः । सर्वप्रियकरस्त्यक्त्वा राज्यं प्रियमनुत्तमम् ॥ १८ ॥
कथमिन्दीवरश्यामो रक्ताक्षः प्रियदर्शनः । सुखभागी न दुःखार्हः शयितो भुवि राघवः ॥ १९ ॥
धन्यः खलु महाभागो लक्ष्मणः शुभलक्षणः । भ्रातरं विषमे काले यो राममनुवर्तते ॥ २० ॥
सिद्धार्था खलु वैदेही पतिं यानुगता वनम् । वयं संशयिताः सर्वे हीनास्तेन महात्मना ॥ २१ ॥
अकर्णधारा पृथिवी शून्येव प्रतिभाति मे । गते दशरथे स्वर्गं रामे चारण्यमाश्रिते ॥ २२ ॥

न च प्रार्थयते कश्चिन्मनसापि वसुंधराम् । वने निवसतस्तस्य बाहुवीर्याभिरक्षिताम् ॥ २३ ॥
शून्यसंवरणारक्षामयन्त्रितहयद्विपाम् । अनावृतपुरद्वारां राजधानीमरक्षिताम् ॥ २४ ॥
अप्रहृष्टबलां शून्यां विषमस्थामनावृताम् । शत्रवो नाभिमन्यन्ते भक्ष्यान् विषकृतानिव ॥ २५ ॥

"Alas, I am ruined. Cruel am I in that on my account Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) with his wife has to lie down on such a (hard) bed like a forlorn creature ! (17) Relinquishing his beloved rulership, which is unsurpassed, how did Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu), born in a line of universal monarchs, who brings happiness to the whole world and does good to all, who is blue as a lotus, has reddish eyes and is pleasing of appearance and who is deserving of happiness and unworthy of suffering, lie down on the ground ? (18-19) Blessed and highly fortunate indeed is Lakṣmaṇa, endowed with auspicious bodily marks, who is following his (eldest) brother in a critical period (of his life) ! (20) Truly accomplished of purpose is Sītā (a princess of the Videha kingdom), who followed her husband to the forest ! We are (however) all plunged in doubt (as to getting a chance to serve him), bereft as we are of that high-souled prince. (21) Emperor Daśaratha having ascended to heaven and Śrī Rāma having taken up his abode in the forest, the earth appears desolate to me like a boat without a pilot. (22) Nor does anyone lay claim even with his mind to (the sovereignty of) the globe, which stands protected on all sides by the (very) might of arms of Śrī Rāma dwelling in the forest. (23) The enemies do not claim as their own, any more than one would like to have articles made of poisoned food, the capital (Ayodhya), whose protective wall is lying undefended, the horses and elephants in which roam about uncontrolled, whose entrances are never closed and the troops stationed in which are cheerless, and as such which is (altogether) unprotected, unguarded, desolate and reduced to a wretched condition. (24-25)

अद्यप्रभृति भूमौ तु शयिष्येऽहं तृणेषु वा । फलमूलाशनो नित्यं जटाचीराणि धारयन् ॥ २६ ॥
तस्याहमुत्तरं कालं निवत्स्यामि सुखं वने । तत् प्रतिश्रुतमार्यस्य नैव मिथ्या भविष्यति ॥ २७ ॥
वसन्तं भ्रातुरर्थाय शत्रुघ्नो मानुवत्स्यति । लक्ष्मणेन सहायोध्यामार्यो मे पालयिष्यति ॥ २८ ॥
अभिषेक्ष्यन्ति काकुत्स्थमयोध्यायां द्विजातयः । अपि मे देवताः कुर्युरिमं सत्यं मनोरथम् ॥ २९ ॥
प्रसाद्यमानः शिरसा मया स्वयं बहुप्रकारं यदि न प्रपत्स्यते ।
ततोऽनुवत्स्यामि चिराय राघवं वनेचरं नार्हति मामुपेक्षितुम् ॥ ३० ॥
इत्यार्षे श्रीमद्रामायणे वाल्मीकीये आदिकाव्येऽयोध्याकाण्डेऽष्टाशीतितमः सर्गः ॥ ८८ ॥

"From this day onward I shall lie down on the (bare) ground or on blades of grass, living on fruits and roots (alone) from day to day and wearing matted hair (on my head) and the bark of trees (on my person). (26) I shall comfortably dwell in the forest for the rest of the period of Śrī Rāma's exile (as his representative). (In that way) the well-known vow of my elder brother will not be belied. (27) Śatrughna will dwell with me when I live (in the forest) on behalf of my (elder) brother; while the latter with Lakṣmaṇa will protect Ayodhya. (28) The Brahmans will install Śrī Rāma (a scion of Kakutstha) on the throne of Ayodhya. May the gods fulfil this desire of mine. (29) If he does not agree (to return to Ayodhya) even when being solicited by me personally in many ways with my head bent low, in that case I shall dwell with Śrī Rāma (a scion of Raghu) for any length of time so long as he roams about in the forest. He ought not to disregard me (I think)." (30)

Thus ends Canto Eighty-eight in the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa of the glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the work of a Ṛṣi and the oldest epic.

Spiritual Endeavour should also be made to gain full triumph over China

The treacherous and barbarous attack by the neighbouring country of China on the soil of Bharatvarsha,—who wishes well to all, loves all, is friendly to all and a staunch supporter of non-violence,—is a most unlucky and lamentable event. Gain and loss come to an individual as well as to a nation according to the dispensation of Providence; but such undesirable behaviour is very painful and, if not effectively counteracted, it may further accentuate such barbarism in future. Therefore this vile move on the part of China should be requited in such a way as to leave no courage, propensity and capacity in the aggressor to repeat such mischievous behaviour. No doubt from the cosmic point of view China too is a limb of the Cosmic Person and looked at spiritually China is none other than our own self and it behoves us to wish well even to the aggressor. But even as it becomes unavoidable to administer a bitter dose to a patient suffering from a fell disease and to subject a festering wound to incision, it is absolutely justifiable and imperative to administer a strong dose for his own good to this devil in the garb of China and if necessary to operate upon this diseased limb of the Cosmic Person. It is a matter for profound gratification that the Government as well as the people of India are unanimously engaged in a valiant and broad-minded endeavour with body, mind and money to give a crushing defeat and mete out condign punishment to this treacherous desperado attacking us as an intruder. A happy outcome of this unhappy event is that men and women of every sphere, every community and every shade of opinion all over the country have joined hands in combating this evil, sinking their differences at this juncture. We appeal to all our countrymen carefully to do their duty by their motherland at this critical hour of national calamity by offering liberally in a spirit of service to God whatever they have till we succeed in fully repulsing the aggressor. Whatever we do should be done as an offering to God. Giving up all expectation of reward, the feeling of possession and the fever of desire let us propitiate the Lord by doing worship to Him in the form of military action on the field of battle.

It should be remembered that India never took the offensive nor was it ever inclined to do so. On the other hand the aggressor has by making an illegal encroachment on our territory imposed on us the unpleasant duty of gallantly taking up arms to defend our territorial integrity. We are sincerely grateful to the United States of America, Great Britain and all other countries that are helping us with arms and ammunition and showing sympathy to us.

While everyone should undoubtedly do his or her level best to meet all the exigencies of war wherever they may be felt, a country like India, which has always given the foremost place to religion, should also exert itself for consummate success in warfare through spiritual endeavour as well, so that all the unholy ambitions of rapacious China, who is casting an evil eye on the holy land of Bharatvarsha and the sacred Himalayas, may be frustrated

and the soil of Tibet too, comprising our sacred spots of Kailas and Mansarovar, may be liberated from the grip of antitheistic and anti-religious China.

Nepal and India for their part are absolutely identical. India is Nepal and Nepal is India. In fact, Nepal is an object of great pride to India, the Hindu race and Hindu Religion; for it is the only Hindu state wedded to Sanatan Dharma in the whole world. Although the Government of India declares itself to be secular, the Indian union is really speaking a predominantly Sanatanist state. Nepal and India have a common faith, a common God and a common scripture. Lakhs of Indian Hindus undertake a pilgrimage to the shrines of Lords Pashupatinath and Muktinath in Nepal every year and the Government of Nepal generously provide them all facilities in their journey to these holy places; and lakhs of Nepali Hindus enter this land as their own home to visit their sacred places of pilgrimage and the abodes of the Lord. Truly speaking, Bharat is indivisible from Nepal in the matter of faith. We have, therefore, every reason to hope that at the present juncture, when India, who is predominantly Sanatanist by faith, is being invaded by the antitheistic and anti-religious China, Nepal, who has always been the defender of faith, will surely render all reasonable and possible help to India. Protection of faith has ever been a natural trait of Nepalese character.

I fervently and respectfully appeal to His Majesty King Mahendra of Nepal, the Defender of Faith, to render service to the Lord by lending support to India in this hour of need and playing the glorious role of the time-honoured and valiant defender and successful Guardian of Faith.

A countrywide wave of spiritual endeavour that came over this sacred land on the eve of the conjunction of eight planets, that took place the other day, was supremely benignant. Even though one may not believe it, it cannot be gainsaid that in consequence of that effort a crisis of very great magnitude for the world was averted for the time being at that moment. It was submitted on that occasion "that the devotional practices which are being carried on are sure to bring their result (and actually did so). But this chain of devotional practices and prayers and this observance of piety should be continued. The ominous effect of the conjunction of the eight planets itself will continue to be manifested for the coming two or three years more. The rare phenomena of the dropping of one whole month from the Indian calendar (क्षय मास) etc. are also predicted as foreboding evil. We therefore appeal to the generality of men to remain engaged in devotions and prayer."

At that time, however, no disaster of a serious type took place. (According to our belief, at any rate, the crisis was averted in consequence of the spiritual endeavours alone.) The result was that even outstanding personalities ridiculed the spiritual practices, aspersions were levelled against them and the sacred chanting of Divine Names itself was condemned. Our belief, however, is that, had the religious atmosphere that prevailed at that time thanks to the spiritual and godly practices that were being carried on at the moment continued, the world would have been spared the appalling calamities that shortly followed all over the world in the form of floods, earthquakes, landslips,

plane and railway accidents etc. almost in every country, or they would have been considerably minimized and the Chinese aggression against India and the gathering clouds of a third world war etc. too would have possibly been staved off. Even now my humble prayer is that depending on the All-powerful and All-merciful Providence we would do well at this hour of dire calamity to engage in spiritual endeavour. The dreadful consequences of the conjunction of the eight planets in the shape of an appalling holocaust and destruction of wealth and prosperity may ensue in the course of the coming two years or two years and a half more. Hence everyone should betake oneself to the worship of Lord Rudra, Mother Durgā, Lord Gaṇeśa, Lord Nārāyaṇa and so on. The reading of Durgā-Saptaśatī, Japa of the Mahāmṛtyuñjaya-Mantra, the reading of the Śiva-Kavacha and the Nārāyaṇa-Kavacha published in the columns of the 'Kalyan' and Japa of the holy Gāyatrī-Mantra etc. should be undertaken personally or got done through Brahman priests. If nothing else is possible every individual should according to one's belief repeat holy Mantras such as "Hariḥ Śaraṇam", "Namaḥ Śivāya", "Gaṃ Gaṇapataye Namaḥ", "Durgāyai Namaḥ" and "Namo Nārāyaṇāya" and undertake the reading of Tulasidas' Rāmacharitamānasa and the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki. The least one should do is to repeat singly or collectively the holy Divine Name, which wards off all evil forces and showers all blessings. Let the air as well as the quarters resound with the sacred and tumultuous sound of Hari-Nāma issuing from the vocal chords of crores of men and women. Let the whole atmosphere be surcharged with the sound of the holy Name.

At the same time let the people of all denominations such as Christians, Muslims and Zoroastrians pray to God, according to their own faith, church or creed, that India, whose very life-breath is Dharma, may come out victorious in its present struggle, unrighteousness may be obliterated, the terrible crisis facing the world may be averted and peace and love may reign throughout the world.

The following memorable words of Mahatma Gandhi regarding Prayer and the Divine Name should be carefully noted:—

"God is the support of the supportless. If you feel inclined to pray to Him for succour, approach Him in your true colours, fall back on Him without any demur and reserve and never let any doubt enter your mind as to how He will succour—how He will be able to redeem a vile and fallen creature like you. Can He who has helped lakhs and crores of suppliants, that sought refuge in Him, betray you ? He has no partiality or discrimination. You will see that He listens to every prayer of yours. God will listen to the prayer of the vilest sinner. Undoubtedly I make this assertion on the strength of my own experience.

"I can unhesitatingly say that the power of 'Rāmadhun' which is chanted with a guileless heart in chorus is quite different from and many times greater than the display of military strength. By repeating the Name of God the present-day ruin will be replaced by lasting peace and joy."

Hanumanprasad Poddar

Editor's Apologia

We feel highly gratified and deem our labours immensely repaid in being able to present to our kind readers Vol. III of the Vālmīki-Rāmāyaṇa Number of their Kalyana-Kalpataru. As will be seen, and as it was announced in the last (November) issue, the volume contains a close and faithful translation along with the Sanskrit text of fifty Cantos more, *viz*, Cantos XXXIX to LXXXVIII, of Book Second, the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa, of the great and glorious Rāmāyaṇa of Sage Vālmīki. The story proceeds to tell us in the inimitable style of the world's oldest and greatest poet how Śrī Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa proceed to the forest in a chariot driven by Sumantra, the charioteer-minister of King Daśaratha, leaving the gynaeceum as well as the entire populace of Ayodhya plunged in grief. Unable to bear the painful separation from their beloved princes and princess, the citizens of Ayodhya follow them *en masse*. Śrī Rāma, however, cleverly puts them off the scent by asking Sumantra to drive in a circle, leaving no clue for the citizens to judge in which direction the chariot has gone. The party leave the chariot as well as Sumantra on the bank of the holy Ganga and proceed on foot to Prayag, where they pay their respects to Sage Bharadwāja and in consultation with him take up their abode at Chitrakoot. When Sumantra returns to Ayodhya and apprises the king of Śrī Rāma's departure for Chitrakoot, the king falls into a swoon and ultimately dies in utter despair and desolation the same night. Consigning the emperor's body to a trough filled with oil, Vasiṣṭha sends for Bharata and Śatrughna from their maternal grandfather's and offers the throne to Bharata on his return to Ayodhya. Bharata, however, scornfully declines the offer and, after cremating the dead body of his father and concluding all the obsequial rites, leaves for Chitrakoot with a large following in order to bring back Śrī Rāma and restore the patrimony to its rightful heir. In due course he reaches the bank of the holy Ganga at Śṛngaverapura, where he meets the Niṣāda chief, Guha, who, after satisfying himself about the good intentions of Bharata, offers to guide him personally to the hermitage of Sage Bharadwāja and thence to Chitrakoot. Bharata is filled with grief to see the bed of Kuśa grass on which Śrī Rāma had reposed with Sītā for the night before leaving for Prayag and finally makes up his mind to bring his elder brother back to Ayodhya or, in the event of his declining to return, to live with him in the forest. Here ends Canto Eighty-eight of the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa. We hope, God willing, to take up the rest of the story of the Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa in the next volume.

In spite of our best efforts to publish the volume in time we are again late by a couple of months and crave the indulgence of the readers for the unconscionable delay. We hope, however, to make up the delay and regularize the issue of the journal in the coming few months.

In the end we shall be failing in our duty if we omit to acknowledge the unstinted help and valued co-operation we have received from our friends and co-workers in revising and editing the translation and correcting the proofs. For the merit, if any, in the translation the credit goes to them, while the omissions and shortcomings are ours, for which we hope to be excused. We have no words to express our heartfelt gratitude to the benign Lord, to whom we owe our all, nay, our very existence and who has sustained us throughout our labours.

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In order that the standard of life of men and women of this country may be raised in the true sense of the term, an organization under the name of Sādhaka-Sangha has been working under the auspices of the Gita Press. In all there are 28 rules to be observed by the members of this Sangha, 12 of an obligatory character and 16 of a prohibitory type. Every member is supplied with a diary which he is required to fill every day. They are further expected to feel remorse for their violations, if any, and to remain alert in future to avoid their repetition. The following are the rules to be observed by the members of this Sangha:—

A. OBLIGATORY

1. As far as possible to view everyone with whom we have to deal within or outside our house as an image of God;
2. To remember the Lord after every 15 minutes;
3. To wake up before sunrise;
4. To turn one's thoughts towards the Lord immediately on waking, and to bow to the all-supporting Mother Earth;
5. To greet one's parents and other elders;
6. To perform one's morning and evening devotions according to one's faith and creed;
7. To read one chapter of *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā* daily;
8. To attend a religious discourse or to read from some scripture;
9. To repeat the Divine Name of one's choice as long as possible;
10. To discharge one's duties and responsibilities with zeal and devotion;
11. To use only hand-woven textiles for one's wearing apparel;
12. To examine one's conduct in the light of the above and the following rules.

B. PROHIBITORY

1. To refrain from deliberately harming anyone;
2. Never to tell a deliberate lie;
3. Never to misappropriate deliberately what rightly belongs to others;
4. To refrain from deliberately touching the person of anyone belonging to the opposite sex;
5. Never to lose one's temper;
6. Never to indulge in deliberately slandering others;
7. Never to give false evidence;
8. Never to indulge in indecent jokes;
9. To give up the use of leather in any form whatsoever;
10. To abstain from smoking and the use of intoxicants;
11. To give up the tendency of killing one's time;
12. Never to witness the dance of a courtesan;
13. Never to see unhealthy pictures on the screen;
14. To abstain from gambling in any form;
15. To eschew prohibited foods and drinks of all kinds;
16. To give up the use of shoes made of leather obtained from slaughter-houses.

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